

# **The Arab Uprisings as Crises of Legitimacy**

## **Success and Failure of Strategies of Political Rule in Jordan and Algeria**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANLC	Association Nationale de Lutte contre la Corruption
AQIM	Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb
CNCD	Coordination nationale pour le changement et la démocratie
CNDDC	Comité national pour la défense des droits des chômeurs
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSS	Center for Strategic Studies
DA	Dinar Algérien
DRS	Département du Renseignement et de la Sécurité
FFS	Front des Forces Socialistes
FIS	Front Islamique du Salut
FLN	Front de Libération Nationale
GIA	Groupe Islamique Armée
GID	General Intelligence Department
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GSPC	Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IAF	Islamic Action Front
IEC	Independent Elections Commission
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRI	International Republican Institute
JD	Jordanian Dinar
LADDH	Ligue Algérienne pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme
MB	Muslim Brotherhood
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MP	Member of Parliament
MSP	Mouvement pour la Société et la Paix
NCHR	National Centre for Human Rights
NDC	National Dialogue Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RCD	Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie



RND	Rassemblement National Démocratique
UGTA	Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

### ***A Note on the Use of Non-English Sources***

#### ***Transliteration:***

In the spelling of Arabic words, I used the transliteration system of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, which can be found online at <http://ijmes.ws.gc.cuny.edu/files/2014/04/TransChart.pdf>.

Names of places, persons and companies were spelt in their most common forms.

#### ***Translations:***

I translated quotations from French, Arabic or German sources into English in order to facilitate reading. Nevertheless, I have left some central terms in their original language and added the translation in brackets.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1. THE PUZZLE

In January 2011, severe protests shook the Arab world. Protesters on the streets of Cairo shouted: “Illegitimate, illegitimate”<sup>1</sup> and called for the downfall of the Egyptian regime. Similar scenes could be witnessed in many other countries. In stark contrast, in 2009 a pioneer study ranking 72 states across the world according to their level of legitimacy stated that “claims about legitimacy crisis or even failure in countries like Egypt and Algeria – to take two widely cited examples – turn out to be exaggerations” (Gilley 2009: 26). Despite this scholarly assessment, many Arab citizens obviously did not perceive of their ruling regimes as legitimate. In the course of 2011 the rulers of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen were ousted, protests occurred in almost all Arab countries, and in many countries struggles for power are still ongoing. Michael Hudson even states that “[a] reading of the first year of the Arab uprisings suggests that they are all about the perceived illegitimacy of rulers and regimes. So, perhaps it should be back to the drawing board for students of legitimacy in the Arab world” (Hudson 2014: 253).

In those cases where rulers were toppled it can be assumed that their legitimacy was not sufficient to stay in power. But this leads to a host of other questions. If protests are an indicator for a lack of legitimacy, what does it mean when demonstrations do not lead to a regime breakdown? Why have the uprisings in Algeria and elsewhere not led to major changes, but were contained instead? Is the reason a more legitimate government or something else? In order to shed light on such questions, it is helpful to take a closer look at the concept of legitimacy and relate it to the question of regime stability, for which it is an essential factor.

Legitimacy is a central category in political science as it describes the acceptance of political rule on the part of the citizens. From the incumbents’ point of view, it entails the “right to rule” (cf. the title of Gilley 2009). Legitimacy constitutes a crucial element of political stability in any setting. It is a reciprocal category that refers to the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. From an empirical-analytical perspective, *democracy* is not a prerequisite of legitimacy. A lack of legitimacy anywhere may lead to severe political crises, the downfall of rulers, and even the collapse of regimes, as mani-

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Jazeera English, 29 January 2011, online:  
<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/01/201112974149942894.html> rev. 22.03.13.

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fold examples through history until the recent popular uprisings in the Arab world demonstrate. So while legitimacy is an important object of study in its own right, the consequences of its presence or absence have decisive implications for stability and thus the maintenance of political rule in the first place. In this sense, the issue of legitimacy touches upon the grand questions and core of political science: why regimes persist, transform or collapse.

Given the multitude of challenges that the Arab countries faced in recent decades, political regimes in this world region used to display a surprising level of stability: no self-induced collapse occurred between 1970 and 2011. This durability over a considerable time span is remarkable. Instead of assuming legitimacy as the reason for stability, some scholars accounted for the longevity through referring to the use of repression (see i.a. Brownlee 2005; Bellin 2004). However, the literature widely acknowledges that even authoritarian rule that rests on force alone cannot last long (cf. e.g. Alagappa 1995a: 42; Geddes 1999: 125; Gandhi 2008: 76; Linz 2003: LXIV; Heins 1988: 21; and many more). This reasoning implies that at least a certain degree of legitimacy must have been present in the respective regimes. Also more recently in the Arab uprisings, only some of the regimes that witnessed large-scale protests have broken down, while others have remained in place. The uprisings certainly demonstrated a crisis of legitimacy in all cases, but have not led to a regime breakdown everywhere. It can therefore be assumed that strategies have been set in place to regain legitimacy or at least to prevent an escalation of protests. Beyond short-term crisis management, it has been proposed that in the long run “the search for some form of legitimacy must be at the core of every regime-survival strategy in nondemocratic polities” (Albrecht & Schlumberger 2004: 373).

The point of departure of this thesis for assessing legitimacy is therefore a crisis of legitimacy. The analysis focuses on the strategies of political rule geared towards solving this crisis. If the strategies of legitimation are observed to be successful, the conclusion is that legitimacy has been restored. Nevertheless, these strategies might also fail. But although a crisis of legitimacy is the point of departure of analysis, not all strategies of political rule that are used during a crisis are necessarily strategies of legitimation. As stability can be attained in different ways, it is vital to look at the whole repertoire of strategies that aim at maintaining political rule. Besides legitimation, repression is also used to stabilize a regime in crisis. It is understood as containing challenges to political rule through constraining or incapacitating potential contenders. The variance of repres-

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sive measures as regards forms, targets and degrees leads to different effects. This may have important consequences for the outcome of other strategies that are simultaneously used. Therefore, repression strategies have to be included in any account of regime survival in a challenging situation.

A crisis of legitimacy offers the chance for recalibrating the relation between the state and society through setting new rules of the game. Therefore, cases of interest are those instances where protests did not lead to a change of the regime, which is understood according to Fishman's definition (1990: 428), i.e. referring to the structure of rule, access to power, and the relation between the elites. It makes a large difference which strategies were used and whether they were successful in order to secure stability for the longer term. While in a breakdown situation it is obvious that legitimacy did not exist to a sufficient extent, the reverse is not true. Merely having survived a crisis does not mean that legitimacy was restored. A closer look at the society is necessary to find out about possible responses to strategies of political rule, as most of these strategies are addressed towards a specific subset of the population. Only on the level of the individual measures is it possible to assess their success or failure from the addressees' perspective. Process tracing serves to establish which strategies were successful and which failed. Then, these findings can be re-aggregated in order to make more general statements. This makes it possible to interpret whether successful legitimation or other factors account for regime survival.

This thesis studies how regimes that survived the Arab uprisings dealt with the crisis of legitimacy. In a nutshell, the central research question is: ***Which strategies of political rule that were used in the regimes surviving the Arab uprisings were successful?*** For answering this complex question, various steps are necessary. The assumption that serves as the starting point of the analysis is that the more citizens regard their incumbent elites as legitimately holding power, the less likely they are to protest on a large scale. The intensity of a crisis is a function of the scope of demands and the size of protests. Another important factor is not only how many people, but which groups protests. The first task is to find out how severe the crisis of legitimacy was that the Arab uprisings constituted to the respective regime. This requires a look at the protest movements and course of events especially in early 2011 in regimes that have survived the Arab uprisings. Which strategies of legitimation were used? Why could elites use these strategies, and under what structural circumstances (social, religious, ethnic conditions, etc.)

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did they use which measures? To examine the success or failure of strategies of political rule, it is vital to go beyond the regime perspective “from above”. We therefore turn to the societal side in order to find out about the addressees’ responses to the different strategies of legitimation. In a further step, what strategies of repression were used, and against whom? Were other strategies more or less successful than strategies of legitimation? Finally, how did all of these strategies impact on the crisis of legitimacy? Did they aggravate it, does it continue to exist in a different form, or could they solve it?

This thesis takes its point of departure in pre-Arab spring research on authoritarian survival that is still considered to be highly relevant despite recent developments (see e.g. Schlumberger 2007; Heydemann 2007; Bellin 2004; Gandhi 2008). The persistence of authoritarian politics in countries that experience uprisings and the dominance of such structures across different regime types demonstrate that the so-called post-democratization literature still serves best to explain political processes in the non-transitory Arab states. Previous literature has already described different strategies of legitimation and attempted to categorize them (see i.a. Heydemann 2007; Albrecht and Schlumberger 2004; Bank 2004). This thesis puts forward a typology that grasps the current strategies of legitimation in categories that are partially established, partially new, but bringing together and combining more analytical dimensions than previous research. Moreover, the study of these measures will be complemented by the often-neglected strategy of repression. This comes almost necessarily with the focus on addressees. On the one hand, some strategies of political rule serve as legitimation in relation to a certain group, but have a “dark side” of excluding or repressing others. On the other hand, legitimation is not sufficient for capturing the whole range of strategies for stability. This study neither claims to offer an in-depth regime analysis focusing on decision-making processes during the Arab uprisings nor does it only consider the societal perspective. Rather, it seeks to investigate the links between regime strategies and their effects on the respective target groups. In this sense, the thesis is situated between regime analysis and state-society relations.

The approach is strictly qualitative and does not seek to quantify the concept of legitimacy, as real life has failed the only truly comparative attempt at offering a numeric scale of legitimacy, as the introductory section on Gilley’s assessment of Arab states showed. Moreover, as legitimacy is shaped by political culture and recent political history, it is highly context-sensitive. Therefore, an integrated analysis of strategies

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through process tracing offers the possibility for discovering causal mechanisms. The following subsection explains the research design in more detail.

### 1.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

During the Arab uprisings, it was obvious from the beginning that the protests implied a crisis of legitimacy and a threat to ruling elites. However, despite the regional contagion effect that the protests had, they were not a uniform phenomenon triggering the same effects in every state. The scope and intensity of the protesters' demands varied in different settings, as did the rulers' reactions.

From a perspective of regime legitimacy, the events since 2011 are a unique opportunity to study in detail the mechanisms of how a crisis of legitimacy is tackled by incumbent elites. As the diverse trajectories of Arab states offer a wide variety of explanatory factors that accounted for different outcomes, this thesis seeks to concentrate on the strategies proper. Notwithstanding the qualitative approach, it is desirable to make generalizing statements about strategies of political rule. Therefore, this study compares two empirical cases of survivors of the Arab uprisings under very different structural conditions. In the causal model which this thesis puts forward, crises of legitimacy emerge in states with dissimilar underlying sources of legitimacy, but the outcome, regime survival, is the same. The analysis of this study mainly focuses on the intervening variables: the strategies of political rule that are employed to tackle the crisis of legitimacy and their respective success or failure. The research design that will be used is a comparison following the logic of Przeworski and Teune's most dissimilar systems design (1970), although not in a strict sense. The dissimilar structures allow for shedding light on the working mechanisms of strategies of political rule in different Arab contexts and for drawing more general conclusions. Moreover, the comparative analysis requires a rather rigid application of the conceptual framework, which enables a broader look at the two cases instead of focusing on one or two obvious aspects. Conceptually, a comparative approach helps to assess the framework's advantages and setbacks.

As a consequence of different structural preconditions, the intensity of the crisis varied. One reason is the different base of legitimacy that was used to justify political rule in these countries. The conceptual chapter will elaborate in more detail in how far these sources of legitimacy are prone to crisis. For now it suffices to state that poor republics were hit hardest, while the crises in rich monarchies were less intense. However, this is

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not a clear-cut criterion, and the paths of individual countries vary greatly. As regards the more concrete selection of cases, it makes sense to compare cases that share each one stabilizing factor (monarchy or resource endowment) in combination with one risk factor (republic or resource poverty) in order to introduce the largest possible variance. The analysis will show whether these converse combinations of factors can offer additional insights into the working mechanisms and effects of similar strategies when employed under different structural conditions.

### **1.3. OUTLINE OF THIS STUDY**

Before setting up a framework for the analysis of regime strategies during crises of legitimation, in the conceptual chapter (2.) the state of research on legitimacy will be described, beginning with the “search for legitimacy” in political science in general and literature on the Arab world in particular. Special attention will be given to the applicability of these concepts to autocratic regimes. Focusing on crises of legitimacy, the typical sources of legitimacy in the Arab world as derived from the literature are described and their possible crises sketched out. Then, a conceptual framework will be presented that allows for the study of legitimation under authoritarian conditions. This general framework analyzes legitimation strategies within different types of legitimacy and can even serve to assess legitimacy in other world regions beyond Arab states. The methodological chapter (3.) discusses the challenges that empirical research in this area faces and presents the methods used, which are process tracing and thick description. After the selection of cases and comments on available sources, the framework will be applied to two case studies, Jordan (chapter 4) and Algeria (chapter 5) during the Arab uprisings. The comparison (chapter 6) of these most dissimilar cases serves to trace the causal mechanisms that are responsible for the similar outcomes. Later on, more general conclusions will be drawn as regards the success of the different strategies, their sequencing, and the prospects for the near future. The uniqueness of the employed strategies and the Arab uprisings in the first place will be discussed through recourse to the previous crises of legitimacy Jordan and Algeria underwent. Finally, the usefulness of the analytical framework will be critically assessed and desiderates for future research formulated (chapter 7).

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The following chapter lays the theoretical foundation for analyzing strategies of political rule. As the point of departure is a crisis of legitimacy, the first part of this section will extensively discuss the question whether legitimacy can be attained under conditions of authoritarianism in the first place. From the literature follows a working definition for the purpose of this thesis, before the concept of legitimation is located and integrated in the spectrum of other strategies of political rule. Especially repression is then introduced as an alternative strategy. The subsequent part sketches out the previously prevailing sources of legitimacy in the Arab world and portrays their corresponding crises, including the manifestation and likeliness of these crises. Afterwards, the Arab uprisings as a region-wide crisis of legitimacy and the ensuing implications for research on the durability of authoritarianism are discussed. The framework that serves as the basis for the empirical analysis in chapters 4 and 5 is then presented. It consists of a typology of legitimation strategies and a disaggregation of repression strategies, complemented by other dimensions of analysis, most importantly the addressees of these measures and the modes through which the strategies are implemented. The analytical framework serves to provide a holistic and detailed overview of strategies of political rule in authoritarian regimes and is so general that it can be applied to cases beyond the Arab region all over the world. This chapter concludes with a range of working hypotheses and an operationalization of the presented concepts.

### 2.1. STRATEGIES OF POLITICAL RULE IN AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES

In the almost complete absence of totalitarian rule today, authoritarianism has become a residual category for non-democracies. The classic definition of this regime type was offered by Juan J. Linz in 1964 and is in the following used interchangeably with autocratic.<sup>2</sup> Despite its many shortcomings, no other definition has been able to create scholarly consensus. After the “demo-crazy” trend during the 1990s (Valbjørn & Bank 2012: 26 for the Arab world), many scholars have more recently studied authoritarian

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<sup>2</sup> Linz’s somewhat blurry wording is well-known, specifying that “[a]uthoritarian regimes are political systems with limited, not responsible, political pluralism: without elaborate and guiding ideology (but with distinctive mentalities); without intensive nor extensive political mobilization (except some points in their development); and in which a leader (or occasionally a small group) exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones” (Linz 1964: 297).



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regimes especially through the lens of a “new institutionalism”, as Schedler (2009) calls it. While this subchapter refrains from digging deeper in this literature, one of the central questions of current research is what strategies rulers pursue to stay in power (Schedler 2009: 324).

### 2.1.1. Concepts of Legitimacy – Including a Twist towards Autocracies

In the study of authoritarian regimes, many scholars have focused on legitimacy. In recent years, both conceptual as well as empirical work has been done by researchers familiar with non-democratic regions. The relevant literature on the Arab world will be discussed in more detail in section 2.2, but important contributions deal with other world regions as well. Recent works include i.a. many studies of China, but also other cases (on East and Southeast Asia in general: Alagappa 1995c; White 2005; Gilley 2005, 2006, 2009; Holbig 2006, 2010; Heberer & Schubert 2008; on Africa: Schatzberg 2001; Englebert 2000; on Latin America: Booth & Seligson 2009; Hoffmann 2011).

Instead of giving a comprehensive overview over the vast amount of different conceptions of legitimacy in all their shades, this section contents itself with shedding light on a few landmark works that influenced research on the topic. In the history of political philosophy, legitimacy has most often been considered from a normative point of view. The classical question that already **PLATO** (428-348 B.C.) [1963] asked is: What constitutes just rule? This question is still present in normative approaches to legitimacy. But from an empirical perspective, answers to this question are less satisfying. Plato actually regarded all existing constitutions or, in other words, political orders of his time as not legitimate. As a contrast, he modeled an ideal state containing utopian elements in which kings should be philosophers – or, to put it the other way round, where philosophers rule. The ultimate goal was to realize justice which Plato understood as the proposition that every free member of the *polis* should be part of the social “class” that accorded to his nature. Plato’s disciple **ARISTOTLE** (384-322 B.C.) [1988] departed from this view. Being the first to adopt an empirical approach, he identified three types of legitimate rule based on the number of power-holders: monarchy, aristocracy, and polyarchy, as opposed to their illegitimate deviations tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy. However, this distinction between the legitimate and illegitimate types of rule opens the door for the return of normative considerations in that the good rulers should strive to realize the common good. But even though this intention can be considered a norma-

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tive precondition, the focus might as well be put on the result and acknowledge some sort of output legitimacy, which is also possible for authoritarian regimes to attain.

In modern social science, empirical approaches dominate research on legitimacy, although normative understandings that imagine an unattainable ideal state are still present. In the following, some of the most prominent approaches will be discussed, especially with reference to their applicability to authoritarian rule. Max **WEBER** laid the foundation for later empirical-analytical approaches towards legitimacy. His definition focuses not on objective and absolute criteria for just rule, but on the citizens' subjective belief in the legitimacy of their regime (*Legitimitätsglaube*). He thus stripped the term off its normative character and transformed it into a reciprocal category (Weber 1947 [1922]). For Weber, legitimacy is so central to politics that he bases his typology of political rule on the corresponding types of legitimacy: rational, traditional and charismatic. Rational legitimacy is based on the legal regulations that are implemented by a competent bureaucracy. Both the staff in the administration and the citizens in general bestow legitimacy upon the ruler. Traditional legitimacy denotes either the patriarchal or feudal types of rule where subjects rather than citizens believe in "the sanctity of age-old rules and powers" (Weber 1968). In patriarchal – patrimonial or sultanistic – regimes, loyalty to the ruler's person is all-decisive. Charismatic rule is based on the belief in a ruler's extraordinary qualities. However, this kind of legitimacy is hard to institutionalize and uphold, especially in the case of succession. In the real world, traditional legitimacy occurs more frequently than charismatic legitimacy, and empirical instances of rule are mixed forms of these ideal types.

Weber's concept has not remained without criticism. E.g., Mattei **DOGAN** claims that Weber's typology encompasses no more than one quarter of states existing today, i.e. democracies based on legal-rational legitimacy. In his opinion, Weber's other two categories have become devoid of empirical cases. According to Dogan, the majority of non-democratic states falls either into a "quasi-legitimacy" type of authoritarianism or is "totally illegitimate" (Dogan 1992: 188). This, however, does not take into account the ideal typical nature of Weber's categories. Moreover, the predominantly charismatic and traditional (i.e. feudal or patriarchal) types of rule definitely characterize non-democratic regimes. As Weber does not assert a hierarchy between the different forms of rule, in his typology autocracies have the same chance of appearing legitimate in the eyes of the population as democracies. However, he does not elaborate on how the dif-

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ferent bases of legitimacy interplay in their individual mix. To some extent the elements of the mix might contradict each other and thus have a mutually weakening effect or at least impact negatively on stability.<sup>3</sup> This problem is taken up by Juan LINZ, who refers to Weber in his classical work on authoritarian Spain and discusses the possible negative consequences of such competing “legitimizing formulae”, which he regards as a typical element of authoritarian rule (1964: 322).

Seymour Martin LIPSET also built upon Weber’s notion of *Legitimitätsglaube* in a simple and often used definition: “Legitimacy involves the capacity of a political system to engender and maintain the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate or proper ones for the society” (Lipset 1959: 86). However, as Lipset’s considerations revolve around the question of democracy and its maintenance, his manifold hypotheses concerning legitimacy tend to overestimate the impact of democracy on the effectiveness of a political system and thus economic development, which in turn helps sustain democracy. If one ignores the bias towards the economy-democracy nexus, according to Lipset’s considerations authoritarian regimes at least have a chance for attaining output legitimacy,<sup>4</sup> even though their stability is lower than that of democracies (Lipset 1960: 82).

Carl FRIEDRICH also claims that “legitimate rule... is more effective rule, other things being equal, than nonlegitimate rule” (1963: 239). His definition serves “to denote whether a given rulership is believed to be based on a good title by most of those subject to it” (ibid.: 246), adding a quantitative element and even a measurement by degree to the empirical notion. He proposes four subtypes, which are religious, “juristic (philosophical)”, traditional, and performance-based legitimacy (ibid.: 236). For rulers to attain legitimacy, Friedrich claims they can either adapt “to the prevalent belief” or try to indoctrinate the population (ibid.: 239f.).

David EASTON’S structural functionalist approach claims it can be applied to political systems all over the world. His systems theory is therefore equally valid for the analysis of democracies and autocracies.<sup>5</sup> In terms of legitimacy, Easton differentiates between two types of support. First, consent to decisions reached by the political system trans-

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<sup>3</sup> In contrast, if these mixes had an additive effect, authoritarian regimes would even have an advantage over democracies as they usually include legal-rational elements. However, the opposite hypothesis bears much more plausibility.

<sup>4</sup> Englebert (2000) uses Lipset’s approach for analyzing legitimacy as “state capacity” in Africa.

<sup>5</sup> E.g., Westle (1989) draws on Easton’s model for an analysis of legitimacy in West Germany and differentiates further between the diffuse and specific forms of support and various objects of legitimacy.

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lates into specific support (Easton 1965). This can also be called output legitimacy in contrast to input legitimacy, which would be diffuse support in Easton's language and is close to the aspect of "belief". Easton furthermore distinguishes between two subtypes of diffuse support, which are trust<sup>6</sup> and legitimacy belief in the Weberian sense (1975: 447). So actually his work comprises two different understandings of legitimacy, one as support and one as a subtype of one type of support, leaving us with incoherent levels of analysis. But as the flow model of a political system in systems theory is a continuous cycle entailing a feedback loop, it is anyway hard to completely disentangle the different kinds of support and completely cut off input from output legitimacy. In his "diffuse support"-subtype of legitimacy, Easton distinguishes between ideological, structural, and personal types (Easton 1965: 287). This functional typology is more abstract and therefore more generally applicable than Weber's historically informed categorization. In each of Easton's types of legitimacy, the authorities and the political system as a whole can be the objects of support. Easton also emphasizes the possibilities of political authorities to tailor strategies that fit in the different subtypes (ibid.: 289).<sup>7</sup>

After some standstill in the study of legitimacy, in the last two decades it has come back to the attention of scholars. One of the more prominent works is David BEETHAM's monograph "The Legitimation of Power" (1991). Beetham criticizes Weber's definition because "it leaves the social scientist with no adequate means of explaining why people acknowledge the legitimacy of power at one time or place and not another" (Beetham 1991: 10). Although he claims that his own concept is applicable to societies in all times, his work is frequently marked by a bias towards Western democracies. Beetham's own definition combines three factors "for power to be fully legitimate [...]: its conformity to established rules; the justifiability of the rules by reference to shared beliefs; the express consent of the subordinate, or of the most significant among them, to the particular relations of power" (ibid.: 19). He replaces Weber's aspect of belief, which he regards as incommensurable and therefore inadequate, by actions that in his opinion are better suited to express legitimacy. However, the underlying motives for actions are just as hard to verify as beliefs. Especially under authoritarian rule, citizens' "acts of consent" may be driven by fear, indifference, or anything else besides legitimacy. According to Beetham's logic, however, authoritarian elections with favorable re-

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<sup>6</sup> A more detailed differentiation between similar concepts follows in part 2.1.4 below.

<sup>7</sup> This consideration is central to the conceptual framework that will be suggested later.

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sults for incumbents of around 99% would not prove fraud and intimidation, but the population's consent.

Corresponding to his three criteria of legitimacy, Beetham proposes the following “forms of non-legitimate power”: illegitimacy defined as illegality, a “legitimacy deficit” in terms of shared beliefs, and delegitimation as the withdrawal of consent (ibid.: 20). While this seems logically consistent, the fact that the absence of only one factor already leads to illegitimacy in general heavily restricts the scope of the concept's empirical applicability. For most authoritarian regimes, legitimacy is out of reach if one follows Beetham's approach. One example is based on the first criterion: the non-constitutional assumption of power makes a government “illegal” and therefore illegitimate for all times, no matter how power is maintained later. So the concept can in the first place be applied to established democracies. One empirically quite debatable exception is Iran, for which Beetham seems to neglect the illegality criterion and states “a congruence between the religious purpose and the basic principles of political authority” (ibid.: 202). The same applies to a quite different case, Saudi Arabia, which he maintains is founded on “purely traditional legitimacy” because of its hereditary rule (ibid.: 196). Stating legitimacy in these cases seems absurd within his own framework, because acts of consent such as elections under the given forms of authoritarianism are either non-existent (Saudi Arabia) or do not touch upon the political order as such (Iran). Rather, the argumentation savors of culturalist notions in an orientalist and essentialist tradition along the lines that Muslims would accept any political justification through Islam – in the mentioned cases especially in a strict interpretation that does not allow for alternative worldviews.

Despite these conceptual and empirical shortcomings, Beetham's concept has often been referred to in recent research. The most notable contribution of the last few years is Bruce GILLEY's (2006) attempt at quantitatively measuring legitimacy, comprising a comparative ranking of 72 cases from all world regions. His definition of legitimacy reads as follows: “a state is more legitimate the more that it is treated by its citizens as rightfully holding and exercising political power” (Gilley 2006: 500). The relativity implied in this definition allows for degrees and captures the dynamic process of constantly seeking and maybe also receiving legitimacy. But then, Gilley follows Beetham in using his three components of legitimacy: “views of legality, views of justification, and acts of consent” (2005: 33f.). Gilley treats these components as constitutive sub-

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types of the concept of state legitimacy and then suggests indicators for attitudes and actions related to each of the components (2006: 504). He uses existing surveys concerning attitudes towards the political system, human rights, the police and civil service. For actions, he draws on data on the incidence of violent political protests, voter turnout and the payment of quasi-voluntary taxes (ibid.: 506-509). Heike **HOLBIG (2010)** builds on Gilley's approach and complements it by introducing an international dimension, the recognition of external actors of a regime or its policies as legitimate.

Christian von **HALDENWANG** defines the legitimacy of a given political order as "acknowledgment of the societal functionality of its regulatory outputs" (1999: 368, author's translation). His point of departure for the generation of legitimacy is thus regulation, and he disentangles the elements during the stages of its formation: 1. the material content of a decision directed at a certain addressee, 2. values and order of preferences within society, 3. the author of a decision, that is a person or 4. authority, 5. institutionalized procedures and 6. underlying norms or principles. The legitimacy of each element can be questioned. Assessing the importance of those factors leads to a distinct profile of a given political order's characteristics (von Haldenwang 2009). Apart from that, the strategies of legitimation are not only directed towards the broader public, but also towards strategic groups such as the administration and thus parts of the elites (von Haldenwang 1999: 375f.). His approach to the measurement of legitimacy takes into account both sides involved in the cycle of legitimation. The relevant elements to be studied are attitudes and behavior of individual citizens as well as of collective actors such as different social groups on the side of addressees. On the incumbents' side, their legitimation strategies and legitimating discourses can be analyzed. Von Haldenwang's approach is noteworthy for its processual and cyclical understanding of legitimation and for taking addressees seriously. Moreover, its analytical openness offers heuristic potential and leads to a purely empirical understanding of legitimation.

### 2.1.2. Definition and Elements of Legitimacy

From the just discussed approaches towards legitimacy some similarities and differences can be distilled. As has become clear, the question of *who* or *what* the **object of legitimacy** is can be conceptualized in different ways. Legitimacy might be directed towards political rule (Weber), the state (Gilley), political power (Beetham), political institutions (Lipset), the political order (von Haldenwang), the political system, its au-

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thorities or the regime (Easton).<sup>8</sup> In the following the regime will be referred to as the object of legitimacy. This choice is taken because regime characteristics are central for the elites' decisions which strategies of political rule to choose. According to one of the most commonly used definitions, the concept of a regime comprises "the formal and informal organization of the center of political power, and of its relations with the broader society. A regime determines who has access to political power, and how those who are in power deal with those who are not" (Fishman 1990: 428).

The subject of legitimacy is less disputed in the literature: the citizens of a given state, either as individuals or society as a whole, bestow legitimacy upon the regime. In this understanding, legitimacy is closely connected to Weber's notion of political rule, since it is a matter of the relationship between rulers and the ruled. However, various conceptualizations presuppose a uniform consensus among the citizens, which is illusory to attain in a heterogeneous, pluralistic society. Therefore, it is useful to add an intermediate category on the meso level between the micro and macro perspectives of individual citizens and society, i.e. certain social groups, as suggested e.g. by von Haldenwang. A differentiation between **addressees** has also been employed in empirical approaches towards legitimization strategies (Bank 2004; Schlumberger 2010: 236f.). This is justified by the nature of legitimization strategies which are often not directed towards the complete population, but aim at the support of specific groups. Moreover, for the maintenance of rule it is not necessary to attain legitimacy with the complete population (Ezrow & Frantz 2011: 55; Beetham 1991: 10).

Besides analyzing the types and addressees of legitimization, it is important to examine how exactly the strategies under investigation are pursued (Schlumberger 2010: 239). This dimension captures the **modes of legitimation**. Up to now, empirical research on legitimacy has not explicitly offered a systematic elaboration of different modes. David Easton included this dimension into his framework of political systems analysis, and the analysis of modes of specifically authoritarian legitimization was suggested again by Schlumberger. Easton subdivides outputs in two modes, statements and performances (Easton 1965: 353). He further distinguishes between the outputs' qualities as either binding ("authoritative") or non-binding ("associated"). The performances are either

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<sup>8</sup> Kane, Loy, and Patapan hint at the "difficulty of distinguishing the *source* of legitimacy from the *object* of legitimization (e.g., is a king's monarchical authority both the source and object of legitimization?)" (Kane et al. 2010: 386).

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binding actions or benefits, while statements comprise laws and policies (ibid.). As authoritarian regimes implement even legal regulations arbitrarily, the second differentiation is difficult to make. Therefore, this thesis adopts a rather literal understanding of statements as rhetoric or symbol politics and further distinguishes between performances that affect the legal framework – the legal mode – and material policies as actual outputs, as they might diverge even more drastically than in democracies.

The *working definition of legitimacy* for the sake of this study is **the citizens' acceptance of the incumbents' claim to rule.**<sup>9</sup> The difference between legitimacy and legitimation consists in the dynamic, process-oriented character of the latter.<sup>10</sup> **Efforts by regime elites to attain legitimacy directed towards different addressees, be they individuals, groups, or the whole population,** are called *strategies of legitimation*. This understanding follows the principle of methodological individualism: according to the model of Coleman's boat or bathtub, "the proposition system begins and ends at macro levels, but in between it dips to the level of the individual (Coleman 1994: 8). Adapting this perspective, legitimation strategies are part of politics on the macro level, but are targeted towards the micro level of individual citizens, besides the meso level of societal groups and society at large. The cumulated effect of the strategies' success or failure again has repercussions on the macro level. Successful strategies of legitimation result in legitimacy according to the definition, i.e. acceptance; a failure of legitimation means the rejection of the incumbents' claim to rule.

The domestic political system constitutes the context in which this interaction takes place. In the literature, the **international arena** is often treated as a further addressee of legitimation efforts (see among others Albrecht & Schlumberger 2004; Hoffmann 2011; Holbig 2010; Sedgwick 2010). The primary addressees of strategies of international legitimation are international organizations or foreign governments, rather than the domestic citizenry. Of course, there might be repercussions and interconnections between the two levels. But it is important to stress that there is no simple correlative relationship between external and internal legitimacy. External legitimacy can have positive

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<sup>9</sup> This formulation avoids the connotations inherent in Weber's *Legitimitätsglauben* that might lead to misunderstandings.

<sup>10</sup> This definition is in contrast to the distinction sometimes found in the literature between legitimacy as the state of full consent – thus ideal and never attainable – and legitimation as the process by which rulers try to gain legitimacy. As soon as the addressees of legitimation strategies are taken into account, legitimacy can be found among some of the addressees, but does not have to be present in the whole citizenry. This focus on addressees allows for an empirical-analytical assessment of legitimacy.



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indirect effects on the population, e.g. when it leads to attaining more political aid, which raises the elites' potential for employing strategies of legitimation through allocation. In this case, to consider both elements would effectively lead to an analysis in which the causal mechanism of one legitimation strategy is counted twice in an imaginary "legitimation formula". But besides this case of converging effects that leads to an overrating of one factor, there is also the possibility that external legitimacy in the proper sense of the word as legitimacy with an external actor – the approval of foreign policy by the US, e.g. –, is a direct cause for delegitimation in the eyes of the domestic public.<sup>11</sup> In such a case, the addressee who actually is relevant to political rule is taken out of the legitimation formula and artificially replaced by an outside actor. From the scholar's view, the level of legitimacy rises, while the opposite takes place in the population's perspective.

As this example shows, the effects of external legitimation are not easily predictable. They might always be ambiguous and work for or against domestic legitimation. So although strategies of external legitimation are an interesting object of research in their own right, they will not be analyzed separately in this study. Rather, they will be taken into account when they directly affect the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. To sum it up briefly: External legitimacy in the sense of international recognition and acceptance will not be dealt with, and international factors will only be considered insofar as they matter on the side of either those seeking or those granting legitimacy.

### 2.1.3. Crises of Legitimacy

Generally speaking, a crisis is a point in time at which the further direction of a development, e.g. an illness is decided upon (Habermas 1973: 9). **HABERMAS** as one of the leading scholars on crises of legitimacy regards it from a perspective of systems theory. As in his understanding, legitimacy in democracies is attained through formal procedures, a crisis is always linked to a dysfunction in the input of "diffuse mass loyalty" (1973: 68). This abstract systems theoretical terminology can to some extent also be applied to autocracies and would translate into blocked input channels, leading to the withdrawal of diffuse loyalty, and after a certain threshold to mass protests. In a similar vein, Catherine Warrick claims that "legitimation crisis is likely to be oriented toward

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<sup>11</sup> One relevant example is the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty from 1994, which rehabilitated Jordan on the international scene, but was met with resistance inside the country.

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questions of values and principles that are at the foundation of the political system” (Warrick 2009: 36).

A more precise attempt at defining a **crisis of legitimacy** is put forward by Muthiah **ALAGAPPA**: “A legitimacy crisis is a situation in which the basis on which authority has been claimed or acknowledged is under such severe stress that there is a strong possibility of its destruction and transformation” (Alagappa 1995b: 59). This definition is adequate for this study because it fits with the definitions of both legitimacy and stability given above and on p. 20. The possibility of the destruction of the basis of authority shows that a crisis is qualitatively different from the fluctuation of regime support as a result of day-to-day politics.<sup>12</sup> In a similar vein and relating the crisis to stability, Svensson claims that the “stability of a democratic regime can only be demonstrated during a crisis, where challenges are threatening the continuity of the identifying characteristics of the regime [...]” (Svensson 1985: 137). Alagappa’s definition makes clear that a crisis of legitimacy is more than a mere divergence between regime rhetoric and performance. While attempts to evaluate whether a government lives up to its own standards are useful for purposes of accountability, such a performance gap exists in every regime in the real world.

To illustrate this, I will briefly discuss a classical and universal threat to legitimacy, protracted economic crisis. **LIPSET** was one of the first scholars to point to the interrelation between the effectiveness and legitimacy of a political system, effectiveness to him meaning “constant economic development” (1959: 91) and thus capturing the economic side of what could be called “performance legitimacy” nowadays (Brooker 2009: 135). Lipset claims that economic crises are crises of effectiveness (Lipset 1959: 86).<sup>13</sup> **KANE, LOY, AND PATAPAN** state for Asia that “[i]n the absence of any other strong planks of legitimation, economic crises can easily become crises of political legitimacy” (Kane et al. 2010: 385). The maintenance of overall legitimacy is then crucially dependent on other sources of legitimacy or alternative ways of legitimation.

In a recent contribution on legitimacy in China, Heike **HOLBIG** and Bruce **GILLEY** put yet another emphasis on this issue by claiming that “[...] economic crises should not be regarded as an immediate threat to regime legitimacy [...] the emergence of legitimacy

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<sup>12</sup> Those common ups and downs are also captured by Dowding and Kimber’s notion of stability (1983: 232ff.).

<sup>13</sup> However, what Lipset calls crises of legitimacy are conflicts rooted in the historical formation of states and do not concern day-to-day politics.

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deficits depends on how the crisis is framed by the incumbent regime” (Holbig & Gilley 2010: 400). But the success of such framing can be questioned.<sup>14</sup> It might work if economic losses could be ascribed to external actors, taking the blame off incumbents. However, when political leaders claim credit for positive economic developments, they might meet problems in staving off responsibility during bad times. The same logic can be theoretically true for other situations. The predominant manifestation of crises in authoritarian regimes is expected to be mass protest, as this is often the only way of voicing dissent.<sup>15</sup>

The **end of a crisis** doesn’t require a restoration of the status quo ante of the same source of legitimacy. Political elites may embark upon strategies of compensation by employing new strategies pertaining to the same source of legitimacy or by stressing other sources of legitimacy. Even the introduction of entirely new legitimization strategies in other areas may lead to the disappearance of crisis symptoms. However, the causal link is hard to establish, let alone measure. Again, we encounter the problem of how to correctly assess behavior: the cessation of previous dissenting behavior or protest involves ambiguity about the true reasons for the changed behavior. E.g. when mass protests end, it is not easy to judge whether the crisis of legitimacy has come to an end because of sheer repression, or because the protest movement has lost momentum in terms of mobilization, or because legitimacy has actually been restored through other means. A qualitative look at the chosen strategies and their success is necessary to reasonably explain the outcome.

### 2.1.4. The Relationship between Legitimacy and Stability

As has become apparent from the discussion of the literature, the close relationship between legitimacy and regime stability is undisputed. Regime stability is a term that is often used similarly to or even interchangeably with concepts such as persistence, resilience, survival, maintenance, and durability.<sup>16</sup> This multitude of denotations makes some conceptual clarifications desirable. Some of the mentioned concepts basically describe for how long a regime has endured and can therefore be measured as a time dimension. Survival presupposes the existence of a crisis that could be considered as a reason for

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<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of the consequences of framing theory results for authoritarian legitimacy cf. Schlumberger 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Other empirical manifestations of crises are described below in 2.2.2.

<sup>16</sup> Bank (2009: 35) lists some of the terms that are currently used in the literature.

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breakdown, but the term does not allow for statements about the qualities of the regime in question. Stability also encompasses this element, but goes beyond this meaning to a qualitatively different level. It can be defined as “the state in which the probability that a regime will experience breakdown is low” (Josua 2012: 4).<sup>17</sup> Of course, stability according to this definition is difficult to assess. The only existing unambiguous indicator tells us that stability *was* obviously absent: the case of self-induced regime breakdown.

Legitimacy can be regarded as a sufficient condition for stability, but is not an absolutely necessary one.<sup>18</sup> In other words, when legitimacy is present, the regime tends to be stable. But it would be logically misleading to deduce from a regime’s non-breakdown that legitimacy is present. Lipset claims that illegitimate political systems can maintain their stability through effectiveness (Lipset 1959: 90f.). More importantly, especially in times of crisis, rule may be sustained through the use of repression. Schlumberger offers a formal approach in order to demonstrate that stability is a composite of legitimacy and repression ( $S = L + R$ ; Schlumberger 2004b; see also Albrecht & Schlumberger 2004). From a regime perspective, repression is clearly on the flip side of legitimacy: Whenever the degree of legitimacy falls, the need for repression rises, if stability is not supposed to be threatened. However, the notion of stability as a simple dichotomous category is hard to reconcile with strategies of political rule which are dynamic and the success of which can be a matter of degree. The first preference of incumbents and hence the overall aim of their policies is to stay in power. In order to maintain political power and contain challenges to their rule, they employ both legitimating and repressive means, which together I call strategies of political rule.<sup>19</sup> While the word strategy may be understood as implying a conscious directedness and intention, I will use the term in a much broader sense and subsume both long-term and short-term measures under this somewhat simplifying term (whereas e.g. military studies would differentiate between strategies and tactics).

On the other side, it is disputed whether repression is the sole other factor that combines with legitimacy to produce stability. In a model describing “*three pillars of autocratic*

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<sup>17</sup> Such a proposition was first made by Torsten Matzke. For different approaches towards the concept of stability see Dowding and Kimber (1983).

<sup>18</sup> This is along “Goertz’s First Law: For any research area one can find important necessary condition hypotheses” (Goertz 2003: 65f.). On necessary and sufficient conditions in general, cf. Goertz and Starr (2003).

<sup>19</sup> This terminology is preferred over the less neutral term of “survival strategies” (cf. most prominently Brumberg 2002) that presupposes a permanent struggle.

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*stability*”, scholars such as Wolfgang **MERKEL** and Johannes **GERSCHEWSKI** claim that legitimization, co-optation, and repression all contribute to stability under authoritarian conditions. These “pillars” induce citizens to accept a regime due to varying motives: belief, material benefits and fear (Gerschewski 2013: 33).

Transitology literature tells us that the lack of (perceived) alternatives in authoritarian regimes is another factor conducive to stability (Przeworski 1991; von Haldenwang 1999: 376). While democracy gains part of its legitimacy from the perception following Churchill’s argument that it is the least bad of all forms of government, authoritarianism can benefit from the attitude that bad rule is better than no rule at all, which would lead to chaos and – instability. This mental mechanism works especially in heterogeneous societies with competing factions of the population or in post-war societies. On a more tangible level, political alternatives in authoritarian regimes are most often scarce, as rulers seek to minimize the potential and number of contenders. As competition about holding ultimate power is already an exception in stable authoritarian regimes, in personalist regimes the personalities that could be widely regarded as better rulers hardly exist. Under conditions of limited pluralism in autocracies, opposition leaders are often complicit in maintaining the status quo, and are therefore not regarded as credible alternatives.

Regarding the variety of strategies beyond legitimization, the literature offers different approaches. On the side of the citizens, it is not always easy to tell whether acts of consent can be understood as an *expression* of legitimacy on the citizens’ part. Gilley utilizes the term “compliance” for non-resistance which he sees as different from the acknowledgement of legitimacy as “support due to personal payoffs or coercion” (2005: 30). Notwithstanding the connotation of support in systems theory, compliance thus means the individual citizens’ resignation due to their awareness of the regime’s repressive capacities and/or the high costs of resistance. This may have paradoxical effects. In a referendum, for example, when it is clear from the outset that the official result will be 99% yes votes regardless of turnout and actual vote, a rational choice perspective can better explain an individual’s decision to vote in terms of a cost and benefit calculus<sup>20</sup>, as abstention from the vote would raise suspicion and oftentimes there are material goods available in exchange for casting a ballot. But even if voting is not intended as an

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<sup>20</sup> According to Elster’s canonical principle of rationality which says that “[i]n the choice between evils, a rational agent will choose the lesser evil” (2007: 215).

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act of bestowing legitimacy from the individual's perspective, incumbents still will use these imaginary results for establishing their claim to legality and popular support. Asymmetric power relations enable ruling elites to shape public discourse at their will. Legitimacy can even be evoked by propaganda or "mass persuasion", as Brady (2009) shows for the case of China.

On the side of the decision-makers, von Haldenwang talks about strategies that can take pressure from the regime ("*Entlastungsstrategien*") in order to process societal demands, often in an ad hoc manner. He gives the examples of political exclusion (repression), the channeling of demands, e.g. co-optation, and the satisfaction of particular interests (von Haldenwang 1999: 376). As other factors contributing to stability that are different from legitimacy he names fear, personal interest, and loyalty. In a similar vein, **HEBERER** and **SCHUBERT** (2008) claim a different meaning of the term loyalty as opposed to legitimacy. In their view, loyalty describes "the maintenance of global trust" despite disappointments and is directed towards a group of people or an organization, not the regime or political order itself. They also maintain loyalty is primarily motivated by subjective interests (Heberer & Schubert 2008: 36f.). The broad understanding of legitimacy adopted in this thesis also includes loyalty, be it towards a leader or the regime. The additional element of subjective interests can nevertheless be adequately grasped by a specification of legitimation which the following section deals with in more detail: co-optation.

### 2.1.5. Co-optation: Legitimation with Benefits<sup>21</sup>

Co-optation is a mechanism of political rule that is commonly employed in authoritarian regimes to substitute for democratic participation by ensuring the inclusion of strategically important parts of the population into politics. Inclusion, in turn, is crucial because it contributes to stability. The main function of co-optation is the silencing of dissent by giving certain individuals or groups a stake in the status quo. The objects of co-optation can be already existing members of the elite as well as new individuals or groups who are tied to the regime. In other words, this effectively means either the strengthening or

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<sup>21</sup> This section builds on a paper presented at the 3rd General Conference of the European Consortium for Political Research, Reykjavik, 24-27 August 2011 under the title of *Co-optation as a Strategy of Authoritarian Legitimation – Success and Failure in the Arab World* which is currently under review for publication (Josua 2012).

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widening of the regime base.<sup>22</sup> As from a regime perspective these two possibilities yield different effects, it makes sense to analytically distinguish between them by construing two subtypes of co-optation according to the addressees of such strategies. I therefore conceptualize co-optation as *all measures by ruling elites with the aim of strengthening and/or widening the societal base of a regime by giving relevant individuals or societal groups a stake in the status quo*.

The distinction between the different addressees of co-optation strategies is fruitful in order to assess the consequences for the regime and its base. If we contrast these two subtypes, a first hypothesis is that the “strengthening the regime base”-subtype of co-optation is more sustainable than the “widening the regime base”-subtype, due to the stabilization of expectations from either side. For sure, a widening of the base might be considered equally important or even bearing more potential for overall stability in case the old base declines. But the loss of former supporters is more dangerous than missing a chance to gain new ones because they might not only stop to support the ruler. More importantly, they could turn to supporting a challenger for power and change the balance of power in favor of a previously marginalized opponent who without them could never gain upper hand. As elites are privileged members of society and group leaders, such an alternative alliance-building would be more dangerous to stability than if the support of citizens who apparently play a less important role in the political sphere was lost. Of course, flawed perceptions among the elites might lead to a miscalculation regarding the importance of certain groups or their potential for a challenge. But assuming a previous state of relatively stable rule, the inclusion and therefore the continuous co-optation of the regime base proper always has to be a priority in authoritarian politics, as the discontent of suddenly excluded groups may trigger unforeseen dynamics.

So far, it is obvious what the rationale on the part of regime elites is for engaging in co-optation. But why would somebody like to be co-opted? The most important reason is probably access to resources in the broadest sense of the word. It means raising the social capital (and most often pecuniary capital as well) of the individual or groups co-opted, along with giving them some degree of influence and, at times, even decision-making power.

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<sup>22</sup> It might result in a zero-sum-game though if simultaneously other parts of the elites or social base are neglected or marginalized.

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Co-optation in its broadest sense can be described as a non-repressive mode of securing power and thus contributing to regime stability. However, the question as to whether co-optation itself is part of legitimation or a third element besides legitimacy and repression is answered differently by different scholars. Gerschewski (2013) conceptualizes co-optation as one of three pillars that account for the stability of autocracies, distinct from both legitimacy and repression. In contrast, authors such as Albrecht and Schlumberger (2004) regard co-optation as a subtype of legitimation strategies as opposed to repression. Within his category of the politics of participation and inclusion, André Bank also finds co-optation to be a pattern of legitimation in Arab states (2004). Why do scholarly assessments of the nature of co-optation differ although there definitively seems to be a relation between the concepts discussed?

One decisive reason for the common separation of co-optation from legitimation stems from the distinction between the different addressees of the respective mechanisms. Legitimacy is frequently understood as a category that refers to society as a whole and legitimation is thus a general pattern of rule, whereas co-optation primarily focuses on certain strategically important groups or individuals. The general impression one might get from the way the term is used in research is that legitimation tends to entail certain contents, while co-optation is focused on specific persons. But from an empirical understanding of legitimation, the individual citizen and his or her belief and behavior are central. In contrast, the decision to co-opt certain people on behalf of incumbents might lie beyond their personal qualities insofar as it can primarily be motivated by their roles as representatives of certain societal forces – strategically important groups.

What both mechanisms do have in common is their non-repressive nature and the effect of appeasing the addressees and removing opposition or resistance to the regime, be it by creating loyalty and acceptance, even collaboration, or just eliminating issues that might generate dissatisfaction. The difference between these two patterns becomes even less significant when taking into account that also many strategies of legitimation are not directed towards the commonalty, but only towards certain groups within the population, such as parts of the regime base or certain elites. This is due to the empirical understanding of legitimacy as a reciprocal analytical category as spelled out by Schlumberger (2010: 234; 236) which leaves no foundation for a normative concept of legitimacy as an ideal (utopian) state. The reasons for the often found distinction between “universal” legitimation and “targeted” co-optation strategies are thus less convincing in



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practice than it may seem at first sight. Again, both strategies can be summed up as non-repressive mechanisms of maintaining power, and both result in the inclusion of a certain group of people, often at the expense of others.

To put it even more clearly, legitimation is a strategy that seeks an individual's acceptance of rule. Co-optation is a strategy that also seeks an individual's acceptance of rule and additionally offers an incentive to ensure that this end is realized. For legitimation, it is irrelevant whether an incentive comes with the strategy or not. As legitimation is the more general concept, it follows from the elaboration above that co-optation can be framed as a subset of legitimation strategies. When we adopt a definition that takes into account the different addressees of legitimation strategies, co-optation is one of various ways to attain a higher degree of legitimacy, i.e. with the groups or individuals co-opted – but it is the job of incumbent elites to choose the objects of co-optation wisely enough to ensure regime stability.

*Figure 2.1: Co-optation as a Subset of Legitimation*

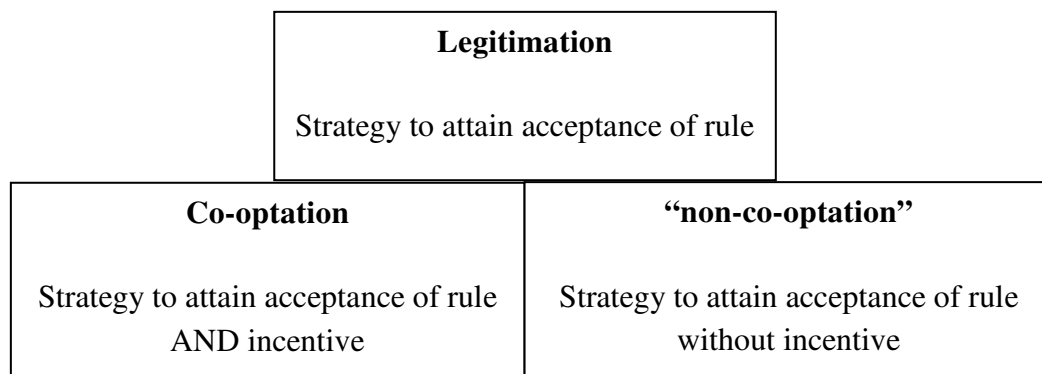


Figure 2.1 illustrates this perspective with the help of the corresponding levels of abstraction: for the less extensive concept of co-optation, one aspect is added to the definition of legitimation.<sup>23</sup>

Co-optation is a concept on a medium level of abstraction: it is narrower than legitimation, but does not yet denote the specific way a measure is implemented. Climbing down the ladder of abstraction, various mechanisms of co-optation are possible, e.g. by inclusion in formal institutions, direct funding, informal inclusion into decision-making processes, policy concessions, patronage, (positively) discriminating policies, etc. Such

<sup>23</sup> For the working mechanism of the ladder of abstraction see Sartori (1970: 1040 ff.).

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tangible incentives for maintaining the status quo forestall any oppositional activities through non-repressive means, i.e. through creating loyalty.

### 2.1.6. The Role of Repression<sup>24</sup>

Repression represents the “dark side” of strategies of political rule. Mostly, repression is seen as a last resort when legitimacy resources are not sufficient or available. However, the decision for repression is not such a simple calculation, but depends on certain characteristics within the regime, the state, and the threat that the crisis of legitimacy constitutes (Josua & Edel 2014).

For all strategies of political rule, the question of addressees is important. In research on repression, Mason (1989) differentiates between three target groups, namely opposition leaders, activists, and the politically inactive population. In terms of the forms of repression, a common dichotomy in the literature is the distinction between “soft” (non-violent) and “hard” (violent) repression (Davenport 2007: 487) or high- and low-intensity coercion (Way & Levitsky 2006). However, regarding the effects the strategies have, it is analytically more fruitful to start from the question whether continued contention is possible than to ask whether the repression measures are violent or non-violent. Therefore, we have suggested a disaggregation of repression deriving from the respective effects they result in. The proposed dichotomy differentiates between a constraining and an incapacitating effect. Constraining repression raises the individual’s cost for taking part in contentious action. Incapacitating repression prevents any action altogether by jailing, killing, or exiling the target person or group.

These considerations lead to our definition of repression as “the *sum of all strategies by ruling elites to contain challenges to their rule by constraining (raising the costs of contention for) or incapacitating opposition leaders, rank-and-file activists, or parts of the politically inactive population*” (Josua & Edel 2014: 4, original in italics). Successful repression means that the potential or actual challengers could be deterred; repression fails when contentious behavior continues, and all the more so when it even increases.

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<sup>24</sup> This section is based on a paper I have written jointly with Mirjam Edel for the Annual Conference of the German Political Science Association (DVPW) – Section for Comparative Politics, Marburg, 29-31 March 2012 under the title *To Repress or Not to Repress. Varieties of Regime Survival Strategies in the Arab Spring, a shortened version of which has been published in Terrorism and Political Violence* (Josua & Edel 2014).

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Taking a closer look at addressees, an ambiguity becomes apparent. Just as the co-optation of certain groups has the effect of simultaneously excluding others, the repression of some might find their rivals' approval. To put it more explicitly, repressing a certain target group could serve to create legitimacy in the eyes of others. Besides, the repression itself needs to be regarded as adequate by some parts of the population. According to von Haldenwang, this is a prerequisite for the use of state force (1999: 375). Therefore, one cannot speak of clear-cut black and white strategies when there are two sides of a medal – opposite effects resulting from a single measure. One way to deal with this dilemma would be to show the legitimizing effects of all observed strategies. This, however, might mean that everything could be regarded as legitimation, stretching the concept beyond its meaning. For analytical purposes, I will focus on describing the directly observable strategies and regard their indirect effects as secondary.

Gerschewski proposes a model of stabilization in autocracies based on different pillars of stability. While he suggests different ways of conceptualizing their relationship as “neutral, substitutive, conflictive, or complementary” (Gerschewski 2013: 27), the considerations above show that repression can have contradictory effects and therefore the relation between legitimation and repression is often conflictive. The general proposition of conceptualizing stability as based on a combination of legitimation and repression hints at the temporary possibility of substitution. However, Gerschewski himself suggests complementarity without justifying this simplification of his own ideas, claiming that the pillars reinforce each other (2013: 27). Of course, the qualification is that not all forms of repression go well with all forms of legitimation and mutual effects are often unclear. While this simplifying approach does not allow for the analysis of more fine-grained dynamic processes within single countries, it may help explain macro-political structural variance in large-N comparisons (Gerschewski 2013: 28 f.).

### 2.2. STRATEGIES OF POLITICAL RULE IN THE ARAB WORLD

The following subchapter offers an overview over relevant literature on the strategies of political rule from research on the Arab world. As these strategies were employed as a response to crises of legitimacy, the formerly relevant sources of legitimacy are presented in more detail. Furthermore, the manifestations and likeliness of the crises of each of those sources are assessed. This serves as a backdrop for evaluating how prone to crisis different regimes were later when facing the Arab uprisings.

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### 2.2.1 Literature on Legitimation and Repression in the Arab World

The Arab world is probably not the first region in which to search for legitimate rule. Area-specific research on legitimacy has long been a relatively neglected field which has only recently come to the fore again. Existing literature in this domain focuses on two central themes, which will be discussed in more detail below: crises of legitimacy and strategies of legitimation. Apart from these contributions by area specialists, the Arab world usually does not figure prominently in quantitative comparative datasets. One noticeable exception is the work by Bruce **GILLEY** (see above), which includes the Arab cases of Morocco, Egypt, Jordan and Algeria. In this medium-to-large-N study, the Arab cases range among intermediate levels of legitimacy. The highest and lowest ranks are held by Denmark and Russia with 7.62 and 2.27 respectively. All Arab cases are situated between 4.48 and 5.25, thus falling in Gilley's "medium-legitimacy" group (Gilley 2006: 16). Obviously, these cases are the ones that happened to be included in the World Values Survey (WVS), Gilley's most important primary source for his dataset. While these countries comprise the majority of the Arab population, they are but a small percentage of the total number of states in this region. As the decision about whether to have the World Values Survey conducted inside a country is dependent upon the general level of political freedoms, first of all the findings are not representative for the region. Secondly, the results of the World Values Survey have to be treated with caution as the usual problems of polling are even exacerbated when dealing with politics in authoritarian regimes.<sup>25</sup> Especially the fact that Egypt and Jordan have the exact same value in Gilley's legitimacy index for the late 2000s, with Egypt experiencing a regime breakdown only a few years later, shows the debatable validity of his approach. Experts on the region offered a diverging assessment already before the Arab uprisings. Most clearly, Sedgwick (2010) was able to show that a very low degree of legitimacy in Egypt was apparent even before the toppling of the Mubarak regime.<sup>26</sup>

Regarding the literature on crises of legitimacy, the authoritative text of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was written by Michael **HUDSON** (1977). He perceives a legitimacy gap in the Arab world that results from the existing structures of legitimacy. Following Easton's typology, these structures are personal or even charismatic, ideological, and structural (institutionalized) sources of legitimacy. The different structures correspond with empirical

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<sup>25</sup> For a more detailed methodological critique of the World Values Survey, see chapter 3.1.

<sup>26</sup> See also below.

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regime types, as “modernizing monarchies” and “revolutionary republics” possess traditional-personal and ideological legitimacy respectively. In Hudson’s normative and institution-centered view, however, Arab states nevertheless suffer from a lack of legitimacy because of the absence of democratic institutions. He thus states a threefold crisis of legitimacy in the Arab world: a crisis of authority, a crisis of identity and a crisis of equality (1977: 4).

More recently, Emma **MURPHY** (1998) was among the first to notice an increased crisis of legitimacy due to economic problems. The decline of previous massive flows of oil rents into the Arab region posed a threat to the states’ allocative capacity during the 1980s. At the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, rulers had begun to employ new strategies to attain legitimacy. In the wake of the recent post-democratization trend in comparative politics, legitimacy has been brought back in various contributions. **ALBRECHT** and **SCHLUMBERGER** (2004) described some of the newer strategies in detail that were supposed to compensate for the loss in structural legitimacy (traditional-religious, material, and ideological legitimacy) and helped re-equilibrate authoritarianism. The authors rejected the expectation of democratization in the Arab world that was widespread after liberalization processes of the 1990s as “Waiting for Godot”. Instead, they point at recent strategies of legitimation that partly used liberalization in order to indefinitely offset calls for democratization, in other words change in regime to prevent a change of regime (Albrecht & Schlumberger 2004: 375). While the classical sources of legitimacy are treated as an overarching variable and complemented by external legitimation, the newer strategies are elite change (both rotation and maintenance), ‘imitative’ institution building along Western models but with different functions, co-optation in order to widen the power base through inclusion rather than allocation, and the transformation of external constraints into opportunities for rent-seeking (Albrecht & Schlumberger 2004: 376 ff.). Rolf **SCHWARZ** (2004) described similar new strategies of legitimation, focusing on the aspect that they are used in both republics and monarchies, the regime types that had hitherto been analyzed as distinct from one another.

The probably best-known account of modern forms of authoritarian governance in the Arab world is by Steven **HEYDEMANN** (2007). Under the title “Upgrading Authoritarianism” he differentiates between five areas in which new strategies in varying mixes are observable: “1. Appropriating and containing civil societies; 2. Managing political contestation; 3. Capturing the benefits of selective economic reforms; 4. Controlling new

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communications technologies; 5. Diversifying international linkages” (Heydemann 2007: 5). These pioneer contributions relayed anecdotal evidence from a multitude of countries in order to illustrate the region-wide, general prevalence of the mentioned strategies. While they did not offer a coherent, theoretically guided categorization for the analysis of the described strategies, let alone an operationalization, it is these works’ credit to put the scholarly focus on relevant processes.

In a more focused vein, **HOSTRUP HAUGBØLLE AND CAVATORTA** (2012) analyzed one sector of authoritarian upgrading, new private media in Tunisia, and through studying the societal response showed how strategies that are devised as top-down policies can have unintended consequences. In this case, the display of a higher degree of pluralism in a previously tightly controlled field may have played a role in actually encouraging non-mainstream opinions and competition, although in apolitical domains. While the approach that includes the societal response is highly commendable, parallel political developments such as repressive measures in the same field are only casually mentioned (Haugbølle & Cavatorta 2012: 110). The focus on possible social change does not make up for the fact that consequences in the political realm can hardly be traced (ibid.). In this sense, the mechanism through which a contagion across areas could have taken place remains obscure.

Among the more systematic approaches towards legitimacy in the Arab world, Oliver **SCHLUMBERGER** and André **BANK** (2002) have made an explicit attempt at measuring legitimacy in Jordan despite the acknowledged difficulties. They were able to detect an increase in overall legitimacy from the rule of King Hussein until 1999 to his successor Abdullah II. They did so by diachronically analyzing the different components of legitimacy and legitimation and found the maintenance of old sources of legitimacy and simultaneous introduction of additional strategies. **BANK** (2004) went further in setting up a framework for systematic comparative analysis which he used to analyze legitimation strategies of three new rulers. His categorization entails three areas that cut across policies in classical analyses: rent-seeking and allocation, the politics of participation, and the politics of symbolism.

Further approaches to the phenomenon of non-democratic legitimacy can be discerned. Peter **BURNELL** (2006) links the different bases of legitimation to possibilities for international democracy promotion. Oliver **SCHLUMBERGER** (2010) elaborates on theoretical aspects of the nature of non-democratic legitimacy and distinguishes between four

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different approaches to its study as an outline for further research: a focus on addressees, the measurement, sources, and modes of legitimation. Schlumberger focuses on a discussion of the sources or types of legitimacy present in the Arab World from an empirically informed perspective. Both Mark **SEDGWICK** (2010) and Julie **PRUZAN-JØRGENSEN** (2010) offer different general taxonomies of legitimacy and apply these comprehensively to one case study each. Sedgwick uses his typology as a checklist to assess the level of legitimacy in pre-revolutionary Egypt and finds it to be very low – an assessment that was proven correct only one year afterwards. Pruzan-Jørgensen takes a different point of departure in choosing one specific policy issue, the 2003 reform of the personal status law in Morocco, examining the legitimation strategies that accompanied the ensuing political process. Moreover, she grasps justifications towards different involved actors and accounts for the reciprocal character of legitimation by analyzing the perceptions that these societal actors held towards the various strategies. However, it is problematic that Pruzan-Jørgensen departs from the various societal groups and tries to establish which type of legitimacy they bestow to a particular policy. For the purpose of categorization, her focus is on the narrative of addressees of strategies instead of the strategies themselves. This on the one hand helps reveal the balancing act inherent in catering to different audiences through one single policy issue. On the other hand, it leads to confusion on an analytical level and makes the study more prone to misunderstanding. One example is that Pruzan-Jørgensen frames a statement by an Islamist leader as bestowing ideological legitimacy on the king, while the framing is actually purely religious, just different from the argumentation of other religious actors (2010: 281).<sup>27</sup> Moreover, it is methodologically problematic to treat the statements of elites or sub-elites towards a foreigner as objectively valid regarding their real intentions or attitudes, as open criticism of authoritarian structures can only be expected to a very limited degree. What is after all an important finding is how the Moroccan king conveys to each group what they want to hear. The consequence that the accompanying contradictions entail the risk of losing overall credibility is somewhat underrated. In a similar vein and focusing more on the ambivalence of targeting strategies, Catherine **WARRICK** (2009) analyzes the interplay of legitimacy and political culture in Jordan within the policy area of gender politics. She investigates gender-related regulations in the legal

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<sup>27</sup> Besides, it contradicts her own definition of ideological legitimacy (Pruzan-Jørgensen 2010: 271).

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system and seeks to account for the lack of modern legislation, focusing on tradition in the sense of “sociocultural legitimacy” as the “cultural appropriateness” of rule (2009: 4). Her study shows the ambiguity of legitimation strategies in Jordan “which safeguarded the monarchy’s power by offering a way for nearly every subject to find something legitimate about it”, a quality that does not lead to stability from her point of view (ibid.: 35). While this mechanism grasps a general pattern of Jordanian politics, the narrow focus of the analysis leaves lots of room for further research.

Regarding repression, there are fewer contributions on the Arab region than on legitimation. This is strange enough, as the Arab states have been known to rank among the most repressive regions in the world (Spinks, Sahliyah & Calfano 2008) and therefore constitute a “natural” area of research. However, repression is at least as difficult to study as legitimation, as it means touching upon a very sensitive topic. Therefore, qualitative studies are rare. Eva **BELLIN** (2004) elaborates on the coercive capacity of Arab states, invoking it as the most important factor contributing to the durability of authoritarian regimes. According to her argumentation, moreover the will to repress is decisive, which is more likely in (neo)patrimonial regimes because of a close relation between the coercive apparatus and regime elites, which makes the continuity of repressive institutions dependent upon the survival of the regime (Bellin 2004: 150). Especially in these cases of low institutionalization of the military, the latter is more inclined to defend incumbents than to serve a national mission (ibid.: 145f.).<sup>28</sup> Jason **BROWNLEE** (2005) also stresses the capacity to repress as the main reason for regimes’ survival in political crises. In particular, he finds that “brutal rule can make a regime more, not less, durable” (Brownlee 2005: 58).

### 2.2.2. Crises of Former Sources of Legitimacy in the Arab World

As has become clear from the discussion of the literature above, both legitimacy and legitimation had already been prominent topics in research before the Arab uprisings and were set to remain one of the promising avenues of post-democratization research (Valbjørn & Bank 2010). The following section discusses possible sources of legitimacy in the Arab world, first elaborating on their contents and then focusing on potential or actual crises of legitimacy. These manifestations of the decline of former sources of

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<sup>28</sup> Later in 2012, Bellin reviewed her study to explain diverging paths during the Arab spring, see below in 2.3.



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legitimacy induce the political elites to embark upon strategies of compensation, either by activating hitherto neglected sources of legitimacy, stressing other sources of legitimacy or introducing entirely new legitimation strategies.

The literature sometimes refers to so-called sources of legitimacy, mostly without elaborating on what this actually entails. The word “source” alludes to the possibility that it flows from itself. However, from the more dynamic point of view adopted here, even existing sources need activation and reference by elites in order to function.<sup>29</sup> No coherent attempt has thus far been made to explicitly link and integrate sources of legitimacy with crises and strategies of legitimation. The “classical” sources can be regarded as constraining variables that prestructure possible strategies of legitimation. They delineate the historical trajectories upon which current leaders can build – or, to put it more negatively, either country-specific constraints or the path dependency that the regime’s setup has to follow because it is interwoven with natural conditions or the state-building process. The sources are thus the foundations that have to be taken into account and upon which elites build when designing their strategies of legitimation. A conceptualization of the link between sources and strategies of legitimation therefore provides a more integrated and holistic picture of legitimacy as an analytical category.

The following sections deal with the sources of legitimacy that were relevant for the Arab world in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As was already hinted at in the introduction, Schlumberger classified Arab states according to their type of rule and endowment with natural resources (Schlumberger 2002: 6-10). This mapping of the situation prior to the 1990s covers all of the legitimating sources of tradition, material legitimacy, ideology, and religion (Albrecht & Schlumberger 2004: 376f.; Schlumberger 2010: 239). The matrix can either be seen as depicting regime types and resource endowment, or, alternatively, classifying types of legitimacy. If the bases of legitimacy replace the existing categories, first, the regime type of Arab monarchies can be subsumed under traditional legitimacy. In revolutionary republics (Hudson 1970: 27ff.), ideology constitutes the respective source of legitimacy. Moreover, the degree of allocative capacity and thus the potential for material legitimacy is indicated by the availability of resources. For the sake of completeness, religious legitimacy as an additional separate

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<sup>29</sup> The sources of legitimacy correspond to what Albrecht and Schlumberger call structures of legitimacy (2004: 376f.).

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category is added to the matrix in table 2.1, indicated by an asterisk.<sup>30</sup> These are the region-specific sources that will be dealt with in the following sections.

*Table 2.1: Sources of Legitimacy in Arab States<sup>31</sup> during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*  
(following Schlumberger 2002: 10; with modifications)

	Monarchies = <b>traditional legitimacy</b>	Revolutionary republics = <b>ideological legitimacy</b>
resource-rich = <b>high material legitimacy</b>	Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi-Arabia*, UAE	Algeria, Iraq, Libya
resource-poor = <b>low material legitimacy</b>	Jordan*, Morocco*	Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen

### **\*religious legitimacy**

Modifications within regimes in the Arab world that have been observed since the 1990s have challenged the continued analytical usefulness of the matrix presented above. The strategies that political elites have embarked on in order to maintain stability display surprising similarities throughout the region, which suggests a certain convergence between the features of states that were hitherto classified as belonging to different regime types, so that former categorical boundaries seem to become increasingly blurred (Schwarz 2004; Bank 2004). However, the Arab uprisings show that even this rough analytical distinction still bears explanatory potential.

The remainder of this chapter deals with the sources of legitimacy prevalent in the Middle East as identified above. The contents of these sources have recently been described in detail by Oliver Schlumberger (2010). The main focus of the section is on sketching out the manifestations and likeliness of possible crises.<sup>32</sup> While these crises are empirically well-known, they have so far not been analyzed in such detail.

<sup>30</sup> Albrecht and Schlumberger blend together “traditional religious legitimation” (2004: 377), however, I consider it more useful to disentangle the two into separate elements in order to grasp both traditional sources of legitimacy that are confined to monarchies and religious legitimation strategies that might be used in any kind of regime, but not necessarily in all monarchies (although admittedly more often there). Warrick also supports the separation of tradition from religion because they “appeal to different sources of authority – the sacred divine versus the sacred past” (2009: 8).

<sup>31</sup> Lebanon and the Palestinian Occupied Territories are left out of this table because of non-applicability of the categories and limited sovereignty.

<sup>32</sup> Also Peter Burnell stresses the “vulnerabilities” of different bases of legitimation (2006).

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### 2.2.2.1. Traditional Legitimacy

Generally, traditional legitimacy constitutes a factor that is not susceptible to sudden change, so the probability of a crisis is relatively low. This quality of tradition is already inherent in its classical definition as “the sanctity of age-old rules and powers” (Weber 1947). Usually, the regime base consists of traditional forces such as tribes or other indigenous groups. The mechanism of legitimation is associated with ritualized forms of reference to tradition. Legitimacy can be evoked by traditional mechanisms of rule, e.g. an oath of allegiance (*bai’a or wila’*) as in Morocco or Jordan, but also by using traditional symbols, adhering to traditional customs and referring to traditional values such as paternalism. Of course, traditional values embodied by ruling elites don’t necessarily correspond to values that are current on the addressees’ side, and vice versa, especially in heterogeneous societies. In Bahrain, e.g., the ruling family’s pseudo-traditional behavior, such as the breeding of camels, would maybe impress a tiny minority, but be ridiculed by the bulk of society (Niethammer 2007: 35). Other leaders succeeded in nation-building in the sense of “inventing tradition” upon their consolidation and were thus able to actively construe traditional legitimacy over time, as was the case in Oman (Valeri 2007).<sup>33</sup>

Of course, there are numerous examples of monarchic regimes in the Middle East that were swept away in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including Egypt, Libya, Syria, Iraq, and later on Iran. These instances, however, did not constitute crises of *traditionally* legitimated leaders, on the contrary. Historically seen, most monarchs in the region had been installed by colonial powers rather than being rooted in their respective societies. They therefore had dim chances of claiming traditional legitimacy in the first place. The reason for their failure was connected to the lack of social base and the distorted societal conditions that accompanied industrialization and socioeconomic developments after the fall of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>34</sup>

What does a crisis of traditional legitimacy look like? A crisis directly related to tradition has to do with the issue of succession, since the ruling dynasty or family is central to claiming traditional legitimacy. However, dynastic successions in the Arab world have taken place rather smoothly in the last two decades. Contested successions con-

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<sup>33</sup> It is important to bear in mind that traditional legitimacy in Weber’s sense reflects purely subjective perceptions that don’t have to match historical facts.

<sup>34</sup> For a comparative study analyzing the survival and breakdown of Middle Eastern monarchies, see Bank, Richter & Sunik (2013).

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cerned the timing or designated successor rather than the foundation of tradition and have so far always been resolved within the ruling elite.<sup>35</sup> The most obvious manifestation of a crisis that indicates a divergence between the regime and the citizens' norms as regards tradition would be the emergence of a republican or revolutionary movement directed against traditional leaders. In any case, traditional rule might only become endangered when anti-monarchist tendencies are incorporated in a larger social (or Islamic) revolutionary movement. Even if such perceptions existed, nowhere in the region is the public voicing of popular discontent with a monarch legally permitted, but instead it is prevented by harsh regulations stipulating the king's sanctity.

As some of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century movements calling for the establishment of a republic were directed against non-traditional monarchs in the Middle East (Bank, Richter & Sunik 2013: 14), with the exception of Bahrain there is no current instance of such a crisis in this region. While Huntington predicted a "king's dilemma" during the process of modernization, this hypothesis turned out to be unfounded in the Arab region since numerous monarchies have survived the past forty years (Huntington 1968). Quite to the contrary, the viability of tradition seemed to be generally appreciated, as dynastic developments in former revolutionary republics suggested. While obviously, monarchical regimes are the places to search for traditional legitimacy, trends of dynastic succession that were envisaged in numerous Arab republics, albeit only realized in Syria in 2000, represented a new strategy of legitimation that aimed at creating the new traditional legitimacy of a ruling family in republics (Schlumberger 2010: 243). The onset of the Arab uprisings seemed to thwart all aspirations in this direction, most notably with the ousting of Gamal Mubarak from the core elite during the last days of his father's rule.<sup>36</sup> Despite all this, it is one of the most striking features of the Arab uprisings that republics are affected to a much larger extent than monarchies. Therefore, the likeliness of a crisis of genuine traditional legitimacy seems very low nowadays.

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<sup>35</sup> Examples include Kuwait, where the designated ruler was gone over for health reasons in 2006, and Qatar, where the son of the ruler couldn't wait for his father to pass away and staged a palace coup in 1995.

<sup>36</sup> Dynastic succession is a viable pattern in other world regions, the most recent example being the transfer of power in North Korea to Kim Jong Un in 2011.

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### 2.2.2.2. Material Legitimacy

While traditional legitimacy concerns the very foundations of rule, material legitimacy as the provision of welfare is more of a matter of policy and can thus to a certain extent be better influenced and generated by ruling elites.<sup>37</sup> Of course, the chance of having a substantial amount of money at one's disposal for allocation is determined by a variety of factors that lie outside the power of individual leaders. In the Arab world, the single most important source of state income accrues from natural resources such as oil and gas. As theories on the rentier state claim, resource-rich states have a structural privilege in that they can allocate money to their citizens instead of extracting resources from society through taxes (Luciani 1987). This allocation works according to political considerations and serves to privilege first of all the regime's constituency, but also the broader population. While semi-rentier states are less endowed with natural resources, they essentially function in a similar way. However, they have the task of securing their income on a regular basis through external rent-seeking. The capacity for material legitimacy is thus far more dependent on the political leaders' skillful rent-seeking behavior than on the actual presence of resources (Pawelka 1994). Unwise international alliance-making may thus quickly develop into a crisis of material legitimacy.<sup>38</sup>

Apart from this problem that mainly concerns semi-rentier states, it has been questioned whether allocation can generate legitimacy in the first place. Scholars arguing from a normative perspective have reservations against the very idea of material legitimacy which they regard as purely guided by self-interest. The underlying question is whether legitimacy can be "bought" at all, as Luciani (1987: 78) claims. Can the distribution of material goods function as a source of legitimacy or does it just serve the self-interest and patronage of the population or privileged groups? The latter view would also affect everything that can be labeled output legitimacy and in any way serves the addressees' interest. More importantly, no mechanic understanding of spending money and garnering legitimacy should be presupposed. From an empirical perspective the functioning of this mechanism can be questioned in terms of the success or failure on the addressees' side. Niethammer found that again in Bahrain efforts to attain material legitimacy are partially futile. While the government allocates considerable amounts of money and

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<sup>37</sup> Thomas Richter describes the various mechanisms of patronage that elites direct towards different social groups in order to attain legitimacy (Richter 2007: 183ff.).

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Laurie Brand's work on Jordan's international alliance-building motivated by rent-seeking which aims at attaining budget security (1994).

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goods to its strategically important social base, a large part of the population doesn't accept allocation as a strategy of legitimation. One reason for this surprising finding is that Bahraini citizens compare their ruler's generosity to that of the resource-richer and thus even more generous rulers in Qatar and Kuwait (Niethammer 2007: 150). More generally, Gilley showed that not the provision of welfare per se, but welfare *gains* correlate strongly with legitimacy (Gilley 2009: 44f.). The citizens' perception of material improvement rather than abstract economic growth is the decisive factor, a finding which is also in line with the Bahraini experience and explains the underlying cross-national comparative disadvantage.

Crises of material legitimacy are easy to imagine and very likely. For the Arab world, Emmy Murphy (1998) was the first to elaborate on the problem economic crises pose to legitimacy. The declining oil revenues during the 1980s led to budget crises, resulting in a reduced allocative capacity and thus a structural loss of legitimacy. The implementation of Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Programs reduced the rulers' patronage power (Murphy 1998: 80). Under such conditions, the social contract between rulers and ruled comes into danger, meaning support in exchange for the provision of welfare in terms of legitimacy (Murphy 1998: 79). A crisis of material legitimacy becomes manifest in the reduction of social services and the discontinuity of welfare provision, the cutting down of subsidies on basic foodstuff and important consumer goods etc. if these measures trigger strikes, demonstrations, or even violent unrest, so-called bread riots.<sup>39</sup> The selective implementation of Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Programs in which subsidy cuts are frequently postponed or even reversed highlights the centrality this factor represents for regime legitimacy. In semi-rentier states, material crises have been prevalent in recent decades and continue to be highly likely. But even in resource-rich states, the high level of welfare provision cannot be maintained forever given growing populations.

### 2.2.2.3. Ideological Legitimacy

While ideology is a very general term, the ideologies Hudson identified as sources of legitimacy in the Arab world had their heyday in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They can be specified in the context of social revolutions as different shades of socialist-

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<sup>39</sup> In order to determine the existence of a crisis, it is a more reliable way to look at the manifestation of a crisis than just to register decreased state spending, as Richter (2007: 192) proposes.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

inspired Pan-Arabism (Hudson 1977: 20ff.). Emma Murphy distinguishes between anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism, Arab nationalism and populism as shared values that used to generate ideological legitimacy (Murphy 1998: 73ff.). While in terms of *realpolitik*, ideology had already given way to pragmatism during the 1970s and 1980s, the crisis that gave the final blow to ideological legitimacy arrived with the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. The reversal of economic policies such as import-substituting industrialization and alignment with Western countries lent a hollow sound to previous rhetoric.

It is somewhat demanding to discern the manifestation of a crisis of ideological legitimacy. One indicator might be a changed regime discourse that increasingly neglects ideology, especially when this ideology used to be central for the regime. If the discrepancy between regime action and discourse becomes too blatant, this might lead to a crisis. In the public space, a debate on the appropriate ideological orientation of the regime is a very strong indicator for a crisis, given the ample opportunities for control over the media in the Arab world. However, this could also serve to justify a shift towards an alternative ideology. On the addressees' side, emerging alternatives to the former ideologies are an important indicator for a crisis. Most prominently, ever since the 1970s, a revival of religion has been observed throughout the region (and in other parts of the world, for that matter). The dominant argument is that Islam, especially in its political activist form, has filled the vacuum left by the demise of Socialism and Pan-Arabism. The discernable growth and strength of Islamic movements might serve as an indicator for ideological crisis in this respect. Public demonstrations demanding political reform on the basis of Islamic values prove the loss of state hegemony in terms of agenda setting and the spreading of norms.

The recent development can be seen as paralleling social movements in the demising Ottoman Empire, when transnational actors started oppositional activism based on an ideological amalgam of Islamism and nationalism in the sense of anti-imperialism. The crucial and striking difference, however, is that nowadays there is no alternative ideology that appeals to the masses. In earlier times, Islamist transnational actors competed with liberal, nationalist and communist groups – even though their popularity was rather limited. The advent of an ideological crisis of legitimacy therefore seems likely and hard to avoid. Still, the Arab uprisings challenge the idea that there must be an ideology in order to achieve mobilization.

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### 2.2.2.4. Religious Legitimacy

Religious legitimacy refers either to the perception of the ruler as a religious authority or to the use of religion as an ideological and/or institutional foundation of the state. For the first case, in the Arab states as part of the Muslim world the element of legitimacy that applies is descent from the prophet's family, which the monarchs of both Morocco and Jordan claim for themselves. While such a claim leaves few possibilities for dispute – as long as the according historical narrative is plausible or at least widely accepted – there are further ways of appealing to the pious populace. Another way of meeting the people's expectations is the public display of the ruler's piety by the performance of religious rites such as the pilgrimage to Mecca or public prayer, especially during Ramadan. A further common element is the integration of *sharia* law into a state's legal system. This is the case in most Arab states, especially in domains where *sharia* law provides detailed regulations, which primarily concerns personal status law.

However, this source is in danger as soon as the divergence between the elites' rhetoric and their own behavior is perceived as unbearable, which was the case in Saudi Arabia. When rulers literally gamble away their moral and thus religious credibility, a crisis might occur. The 1979 attack on and occupation of the Grand Mosque in Mecca was the most obvious example of such a crisis. It is somewhat hard to measure a lesser crisis of religious legitimacy, but it might exist whenever citizens start to pray in illegal mosques and join outlawed Islamist parties or demonstrations. However, the mere existence of a strong Islamic movement doesn't constitute a crisis as long as it acts within the limits set by the regime, as some sort of loyal opposition. But if Islamist activists call for the overthrow of a ruler who tries to use religion as a source of legitimacy, as was the case in Saudi Arabia in 1979, we can certainly speak of a crisis.

Summarizing the results of the previous subchapters, table 2.2 lists the different sources of legitimacy as well as the likeliness and manifestations of their possible crises.



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Table 2.2: Crises of Classical Sources of Legitimacy in the Arab World

Source	Likelihood and type of crisis	Manifestation of crisis
<b>tradition</b>	<i>low</i> : crisis of succession	power struggles, popular demands for a republic
<b>religion</b>	<i>medium</i> : growing incongruence of regime's and citizens' norms  elites' disregard of sharia	loss of credibility, (growth of oppositional Islamist movements)  growing militancy of Islamists
<b>collectivist ideology</b>	<i>high</i> : decline of ideology, acting against ideology	emergence of alternatives Islamist demonstrations
<b>material legitimacy</b>	<i>low in rentier states</i> : decline of state revenues  <i>high in semi-rentier states</i> : increasing external debt, state bankruptcy	reduction of social expenditures  bread riots, calls for accountability

### 2.3. THE ARAB UPRISINGS AS A CRISIS OF LEGITIMACY

The following subchapter first sketches out some general consequences the Arab uprisings had for the question of legitimacy and then relates the crises back to the different sources of legitimacy. It goes on to discuss scholarly assessments of these new developments, touching upon the question what role regime types played in general. Finally, some of the literature that continues to study authoritarian strategies of political rule is presented, including some of the more innovative research that seeks to account for recent phenomena.

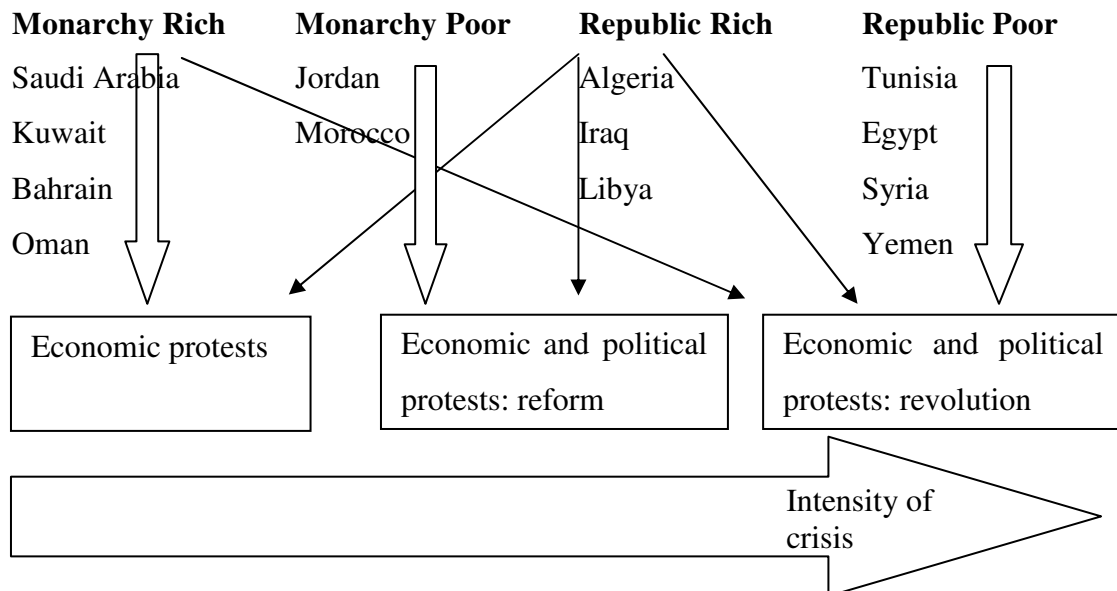
The Arab uprisings had an ambiguous effect on politics. On the one hand, new political norms became viral. Even though the transformation processes in other Arab states did not necessarily result in democratization, the long-held perception that only authoritarianism was a viable form of political rule in the region faded away. The political analyst Muhammad Abu Rumman spoke of an "Arab democratic wave" in his column in the Jordanian independent daily newspaper Al-Ghad (31 March 2011). A new principle of legitimacy that had only been evoked in top-down discourse before now became tangible for Arab citizens to claim themselves. On the one hand, this meant that it became harder to censor open resistance against autocratic rule. On the other hand, the unrest

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and civil war that soon emerged in other countries made it clear that the costs of deposing rulers have been very high and might be too high even for reform activists.<sup>40</sup>

Depending on what kinds of protests took place, the intensity of the crisis of legitimacy rose. Economic protests resulted in the least intensive crisis of legitimacy. But frequently, political added to economic grievances. It was yet a further step to call for an overthrow of the political structures than for mere changes within an existing regime. Relating the demands voiced during the protests back to the straightforward classification of political systems, it becomes obvious that generally speaking, the resource-poor republics were most affected by protests during which the people demanded the fall of the regime (Arabic: *isqat an-nizam*). Not only were different regimes more or less prone to crisis, but also the respective governments' strategies for managing the Arab uprisings diverged in the various settings. Figure 2.2 below roughly illustrates the main tendencies that characterize the protests in Arab countries with different regime characteristics that also correspond to certain combinations of sources of legitimacy.

*Figure 2.2: Regime Types and Intensity of Crisis during the Arab Uprisings*



Regimes that have survived the uprisings tend to be found on the left side and in the middle. On the “stable” side, it is hard to study crises when there is little indication for

<sup>40</sup> For one of the first comprehensive accounts of the regional “tidal wave” and reverse developments cf. Lynch (2012b).

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their existence in the first place.<sup>41</sup> A higher degree of crisis management is necessary when protests actually take place than in the low-intensity cases.

As this figure shows, the sources of legitimacy described above are in some respects still relevant for understanding the Arab world. They especially help explain the level of protests and intensity of the existing crises of legitimacy. However, they are neither intended nor fit to grasp newer strategies of political rule that are part of recent and on-going events. The choice of strategies is contingent upon many different factors, such as structural constraints and the preferences of actors involved. While a clear analytical separation would be desirable, the factors that make a crisis more or less likely also play a role in the decision through which strategies the crisis is solved.

Michel Camau suggests taking the crises of legitimacy as the point of departure for studying the prevention and management strategies that incumbent elites employ (Camau 2012). However, he differentiates between crises of legitimacy – which all regimes suffer from, at least in the eyes of some – and crises of legitimation. The latter exist when large parts of the population engage in open contestation and seek revolutionary change, therefore only Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Yemen and Syria fall in this category (*ibid.*).

After the Arab uprisings, a debate quickly emerged, of course guided by the public, whether the post-democratization strand of literature was still relevant or, given the collapse of authoritarian regimes, based on wrong assumptions. As in several countries the durability and stability of authoritarian rule had suddenly come to an end, many scholars claimed that it had been grossly overestimated in the strands of research discussed above (see e.g. Gause 2011a, 2011b; Teti 2012; Pace & Cavatorta 2012). Various new and long neglected objects of study came center stage. Among them were the contentious politics of both well-known and new social actors, including political parties, unions and online activists.<sup>42</sup> Some of these works focused on economic grievances, ways of mobilization and the role of new technology. In a different vein, the military gained new prominence as an object of research.

As one of the proponents of post-democratization literature (cf. Valbjørn & Bank 2010), Morten VALBJØRN critically reviewed the previous research agenda and found that by

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<sup>41</sup> In the opposite cases of regime breakdown, manifold variables play a role and are of greater relevance than the last few decisions taken by an almost ousted ruler. Moreover the effects of such strategies can better be studied when they are not lost in turmoil.

<sup>42</sup> The revised edition of Beinin and Vairel's (2013) work on social movements is one case in point.

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and large, “this strand within Middle East scholarship has not become obsolete” (Valbjørn 2012: 26). Especially the fact that processes of democratization are much more rare than other forms of regime change leads to his “less optimistic” outlook, assuming less change than continuity for the near future (Valbjørn 2012: 29). While on the level of possible research interests and relevance of topics a broader perspective on politics seems to be appropriate, one desiderate now is “to understand how the changed regional and domestic contexts and the general re-politicization affect the choice of regime survival strategies, including their potential for success” (Valbjørn 2012: 33). This is also the point of departure of this thesis. Especially for the “null cases” without major changes, which Bellin refers to as “a ‘silent spring’ in the Arab world, [...] there is no better place to begin to explain their incidence than in the persistence of authoritarianism literature” (2012: 143).

Also in the francophone political science, a 2012 special issue of *Revue Internationale de Politique Comparée* continues to analyze legitimation strategies of authoritarian regimes, including comparisons of Egypt and Morocco as well as of Oman and Bahrain (Valeri 2012), in order to explain the latter’s resilience (see Gatelier & Valeri 2012). One argument VALERI brings forward is that the former scattering of the opposition in Bahrain now prevents a negotiated exit strategy even for the king (2012: 117). The personal legitimacy of the rulers of Oman and Bahrain has suffered as they were perceived as being disconnected from the population (ibid.: 119). Finally a strategy in Oman is to stress the existing stability as a comparative advantage in the region (ibid.: 122).

One current discussion in the literature that has gained new prominence in the context of the Arab uprisings revolves around the question whether monarchies have an advantage over republics, and if so, why. Sean Yom and Gregory Gause deny any monarchical legitimacy with reference to the overthrown Arab kings of the 1950s and 1960s and seek to falsify the existence of traditional legitimacy altogether by hinting at previous crises of legitimacy during the tumultuous 1970s (2012: 77f.). They attribute monarchic stability to three factors that are mainly valid for the Gulf monarchies: the existence of historical cross-cutting coalitions, the availability of hydrocarbon rents, and foreign patrons (Yom & Gause 2012: 81-84). According to their findings, at least two out of the three factors are present in every Arab monarchy, with foreign patrons being the common element in all of the cases (cf. table 2 in ibid.: 86). While empirically the analysis is certainly valid and points at important issues, the argument the authors want to make

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is not convincing at all, but rather backfires. None of the elements that are supposed to account for royal “exceptionalism” is in any way specific to monarchies. Instead, they can also be found in Arab republics (and may serve to explain their stability in some cases as well). So in order to back their theoretical claims, the authors should rather have compared monarchies with republics in order to carve out the crucial differences between these regime types.

In his statistical cross-time analysis, Victor Menaldo finds that “political instability for the MENA monarchs is considerably less frequent than for the republics. The only exception is 1955 to 1957 and 1972 to 1975” (2012: 709). Tribalism as the most important feature of a “unique political culture has provided the region’s monarchs with legitimacy” (ibid.). Argumentation-wise, his analysis does not offer any convincing further explanation that can be used in the following.<sup>43</sup> Sean Yom stresses the kings’ autocratic statecraft, particularly their ability to stand above politics and therefore better manage the opposition (2012: 3). Michael Herb (2012) deconstructs the claim that oil is the monarchies’ stabilizing factor through empirical counterevidence. Instead, he adopts a legitimization-oriented view by hinting at tradition, and conversely also explains the Bahraini uprising through a lack of legitimacy. He suggests the kings’ “ability to promise reform” as an outstanding element in that they have leeway for making credible concessions on the long and fictitious road towards constitutional monarchy. Moreover, Herb prominently brings up the matter of intra-regional comparison as “the sense amongst their citizens that [...] monarchical rule was better than the republican alternatives” because it delivers “less-bad results” (Herb 2012). Both in terms of the intensity of the crisis and of the consequences, the patterns are relatively clear: demands were framed in a more uncompromising way in republics, and all forced regime changes happened in republics. Nevertheless, monarchies were affected by protests, due to a regional contagion which in itself is worth studying.

Kurt WEYLAND (2012) offers an explanation for the fast spreading of protests across the Arab region that is informed by cognitive psychology and posits causal mechanisms on the individual level. The “heuristics of availability and representativeness” are two inferential shortcuts that replace rational decisions in situations of dramatic and sudden events like the Arab uprisings (Weyland 2012: 921). In the heuristic of availability,

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<sup>43</sup> Especially the way in which he measures tribalism, as an agricultural variable denoting the time that has passed since the Neolithic Revolution, seems somewhat far-fetched (Menaldo 2012: 716).

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

“[s]tunning events have an excessive impact on perception and thinking, leading people to overestimate their likelihood” (ibid.). The representativeness heuristic has two relevant effects: it makes people “believe that patterns visible in limited samples are ‘representative’ of the whole population” (ibid.). The second effect is the representativeness of the example they see in other contexts, leading them to overestimate similarities and discard relevant differences that make the same event unlikely in their own case. According to Weyland and grounded on empirical evidence, the Tunisian model of deposing a president was emulated by Egyptians against all odds. Such a decision for protests despite unfavorable circumstances is especially likely when the protest movement lacks an organizational leadership that would act much more rationally (ibid.: 922ff.). While the protesters in Egypt also achieved their primary goal, the cognitive heuristics are held responsible for rather futile demonstrations in other Arab countries: the structural constraints and differences were underestimated under the impression of the sudden Tunisian and Egyptian examples. This micro-level approach helps explain why the protests spread so quickly across the region, but were mostly unsuccessful. Another mechanism accounting for failed protests is the perception by elites that is also informed by the events in other countries, leading them to adapt their tactics as to prevent similar developments (ibid.).

In a similar vein, **LEENDERS AND HEYDEMANN** (2012) add a regional dimension to Social Movement Theory to explain the onset of protests in Dar‘a in Syria. They argue that Syrians perceived of external events in Tunisia and Egypt as of changing opportunity structures in their own countries (Leenders & Heydemann 2012: 141). The authors stress how important it was for protesters to actually frame the developments in neighboring countries as new domestic opportunities (ibid.: 143).

In an earlier contribution, **HEYDEMANN AND LEENDERS** (2011) had already gone beyond mainstream works on the Arab uprisings in not only studying the uprisings, but also the “regime responses” in the sense of authoritarian learning. They detected contagion effects not only with the protesters who had real examples of achieving change, but also learning effects among those rulers who tried to deal with the political crises and aimed at stabilizing the situation. One of their arguments is that in the cases of delayed protests, the rulers had the opportunity to learn from their overthrown peers and were thus better prepared to evaluate their options and, in most cases, quell the uprisings

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(Heydemann & Leenders 2011: 651). At this point, the repression of protests in general gained new scholarly interest.

The developments of the Arab uprisings were among other things characterized by the decisive role of military behavior and gave a boost to the study of the military and security forces after decades of scholarly negligence.<sup>44</sup> Building on her previous work on repression which has already been discussed above in 2.2.1., Eva Bellin (2012) repeated her argument about how the military's will and capacity to repress come about. One of the strengths of her contribution is that she offers a region-wide explanation of military defection or non-defection. While the capacity to repress is determined by fiscal health and international support networks, the will to repress depends upon the institutionalization of the military and popular mobilization (Bellin 2012: 128f.). In the following, Bellin discusses reasons for popular mobilization which are more specific to recent events, mentioning grievances, emotional triggers, the new-found sense of impunity, and social media (ibid.: 136). However, as she tries to answer two questions at the same time (i.e. when does the military defect, and why was there a surge in popular mobilization), her analysis of repression falls short of including other strategies that are employed simultaneously, although she mentions "the 'right' mix of repression and cooperation" in the introduction. Moreover, neither are the target groups of repression considered nor are agents of repression besides the military forces analyzed.

Not only was the behavior of the security forces decisive for the outcome of regime change or not, but it also affected the dynamics between protests and repression on a lower level. Ryan posits that "in every case where the civilian pro-democracy and pro-reform demonstrators were peaceful, the degree of violence was determined not by them, but by the responses and actions of government security forces" (2012: 155).

Josua & Edel (2014) offer a more holistic explanation of the decision for repression, considering characteristics of the state, the regime and the challenge posed by opponents in an integrated framework. After offering an addressee-oriented definition of repression, which has already been cited above, we tested various hypotheses regarding the circumstances under which more repression is likely. The disaggregation of repression also took into account different types that are employed and the target groups.

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<sup>44</sup> The most notable exception is Cook (2007).

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However, as repression was studied as the dependent variable, our analysis did only marginally consider its effects.

Having shed light on some current contributions on strategies of political rule during the Arab uprisings, it has become clear that there are many innovative approaches, but also loose ends. The analytical framework which will be presented in the next subchapter seeks to bind together some of these in order to approach a more holistic model.

### 2.4. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.4.1. An Alternative Framework for Analyzing Legitimation

The aim of the following section is to broaden the perspective from merely region-specific sources of legitimacy to a more general framework of analysis that is applicable both to the study of crises during the Arab uprisings and other cases around the world. A variety of taxonomies for classifying subtypes of legitimacy has been offered, both in the standard literature as reviewed above and in recent approaches (for the latter see i.a. Sedgwick 2010, Pruzan-Jørgensen 2010, Murphy 1998). However, from the elaborations above follows a slightly different focus as regards the importance of the suggested types and also a different categorization. In order to broaden the picture again and to gain a more holistic perspective on the mechanisms of strategies of political rule in Arab states today, first an alternative typology of legitimation is presented that takes into account the considerations of the discussion of the literature.

An integration of the classifications by Weber and Easton in their empirical-analytical tradition serves as the basis for the framework of types of legitimation. As mentioned before, Easton distinguishes between the structural, ideological and personal types of legitimacy (Easton 1965: ch. 19). His typology remains on a very abstract level. In order to gain more substantial categories, Easton's types are supplemented and/or specified according to the elaborations on the region-specific sources described above, taking into account the *contents* of legitimation that are predominant in the region and cases under investigation. The subcategories chosen for the sake of this study are partially derived from the discussion of "classical" sources of legitimacy above: **structural, traditional, identity-related, material, and personal legitimacy**.

This typology mends the various shortcomings of other approaches: it is empirically more relevant than Weber's categorization and is situated on a level of abstraction between Easton's grand general categories and more fine-grained analyses.



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In addition, the typology offered here points directly at the structural opportunity for translation into strategies of legitimation, according to Easton's claim that "the sources that feed and fortify sentiments of legitimacy can also be interpreted as devices through which the members of a system may seek to arouse or maintain a minimal level of support" (Easton 1965: 289). This means that the basic resources and possibilities for garnering support in the various fields can be assessed and subsequently the various strategies that are actually employed are investigated. This additional step may illustrate where there is potential for which strategies or not. The following paragraphs spell out the particular meanings that are connoted to my usage of the terms.

*Structural legitimacy* describes "the extent to which they [the authorities, M.J.] are perceived to occupy valid roles in the political structure, to have been selected in accordance with the norms of the regime, and to wield their power in the manner prescribed by these norms and by the regime goals" (ibid.: 298f.). Structural legitimacy as it will be used here partly corresponds to Weber's notion of rational legitimacy, albeit in a modified sense that more aptly grasps its function in authoritarian regimes. It refers to formal and informal institutions that are present in any regime. Easton's terminology is preferred over Weber's legal-rational legitimacy which would be misleading in the Arab world due to the dominance of informal institutions and practices despite the existence of codified laws in neo-patrimonial regimes. Of course the concept of neo-patrimonialism explicitly refers to legal-rational elements, especially the bureaucracy, and thereby differs from patrimonialism proper. But these institutions do not work according to the rational principles Weber envisioned, and legitimacy does not accrue primarily from the regime's rationality, but from tradition and the provision of welfare services (Pawelka 1985: 24f.). Although rulers constantly refer to laws, these laws do not serve as the foundation and restriction of rule. Rather, laws are created and redesigned to fit the ruler's needs as his tools. Therefore, rule is not rational in Weber's sense. Structural legitimacy as it will be used here concerns the setup of the polity, including institutions reminiscent of democracies such as parliaments, elections, and other "imitative institutions" (Albrecht & Schlumberger 2004: 380 ff.). As to the mode of symbol politics, talking about democracy in the domestic public sphere and referring to the political system as a democracy in discourse are strategies that are supposed to foster this type of legitimacy. One often mentioned possibility for structural legitimation in the sense of co-optation is the widening of political participation. This never amounts to

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

participation in a democratic sense, but rather implies the responsiveness of elites. Common strategies are granting citizens a greater say in politics and including hitherto underprivileged groups into decision-making structures. One important addressee of co-optation is the legal opposition.<sup>45</sup>

**Traditional legitimacy** in the classical Weberian sense is understood in the same way it has been used in area studies as described above, although separate from religious claims. Traditional legitimation is more credible and thus more likely to be successful in monarchies than in republics. The political culture is especially important, as rulers can strive to attain the crucial congruence<sup>46</sup> of traditional norms with their self-representation and other strategies of rule, such as paternalism.<sup>47</sup>

Easton's category of *ideology* is much broader than the notion of ideological legitimacy described above in the specific historical context of the Arab region. For Easton, ideology is "[o]ne of the most stable sources of support for a regime" (Easton 1965: 293) in that it also possesses potential for manipulation by the regime (ibid: 296f.). In order to avoid confusion with the above mentioned area-specific ideological legitimacy and to grasp a broader array of strategies that concern the construction of citizens' identities, this type is called **identity-related legitimacy**. Concerning the according strategies of legitimation, there are two important subtypes; one refers to nationalism, the other to religion.<sup>48</sup> For garnering identity-related legitimacy in a nationalist vein, symbol politics are of utmost importance, e.g. by creating a narrative around an "imagined community" (Anderson 1983). Probable addressees for nationalist legitimation strategies are ethnic groups or individuals with a nationalist ideology or agenda. Minority politics might play a role here. In the religious sector, on the legal level one possibility is to introduce or to strengthen regulations that are in accordance with religious law. On the discourse level, regime elites may adopt religious arguments for legitimating their policies or display their personal piety. As to co-optation in the domain of religion, binding religious leaders to the regime is a standard strategy of religion politics. But even ideological currents

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<sup>45</sup> The overlap with the legal regulation mode becomes clear when considering that both strategies are implemented by using or introducing elections, parliaments, and other formal and informal institutions.

<sup>46</sup> See Pickel and Stark (2010) for the general relation between political culture and legitimacy in autocratic regimes.

<sup>47</sup> Schatzberg (2001) presents an empirical study of the relation between political culture and legitimacy in Africa.

<sup>48</sup> Pickel (2010: 198) also cites ideology as a source of legitimacy, comprising nationalism, equality, religion and shared norms.

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that are incompatible with the officially promoted interpretation of religion might be co-opted through adopting a *laissez-faire* approach.

**Material legitimacy** is a twofold category that needs further specification in relation to its ideological background and outlook concerning economic aims. Two dominant mindsets may serve as guidelines for which strategies to pursue: either equality-oriented mass allocation in a collectivist sense, which is attained through state-led development, or modernization in a neo-liberal vein which is supposed to foster economic growth in terms of macroeconomic indicators. Material legitimacy comprises a large part of what might elsewhere be subsumed under the label of performance legitimacy (Easton 1965, Brooker 2009). Performance legitimacy generates specific support in Easton's terminology. It is neglected in the suggested framework because policies are treated as a distinct mode of legitimation (see below) that can be applied in all different types of legitimation strategies and is therefore already sufficiently accounted for in this framework. Material legitimacy, by contrast, aims only at the citizens' welfare, or at least a subgroup of them.

**Personal legitimacy** flows "from the estimate of the personal merit and worth of the authorities rather than only from the validity of their position in the system or their compatibility with the ideological premises of the members" (Easton 1965: 303). Again, this broad category is preferred over Weber's more specific and empirically rare charismatic legitimacy, which in the Arab world may only be ascribed to Nasser and probably Gaddafi. A stretching of this concept occurs frequently, referring to what should be categorized more generally as personal legitimacy. It is based on the ruler's credibility and personal abilities.<sup>49</sup> In the predominantly neo-patrimonial Arab regimes, personal, even familial ties and the ruler's personal qualities are central. One important element here is to portray a ruler as a modern personality with a genuine intention to reform etc., leading other credible persons, e.g. opinion leaders, to endorse his words and deeds.

Legitimacy is not only contextual in relation to the norms and rules of a specific society, the respective society is also embedded in a regional environment of surrounding societies which share some features, but differ with respect to others. As the example on material legitimation showed, legitimacy is not only assessed in relation to previous times.

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<sup>49</sup> For Albrecht and Frankenberger, *merito-personal legitimacy* is a defining core trait of authoritarian regimes in general (2010: 57f.).

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Moreover, citizens perceive of legitimacy also in comparison to the characteristics of other regimes. This creates an opportunity for the respective rulers to present themselves as more liberal, more secular or more pious, safer or better than those of surrounding states (see Schlumberger 2008: 173f. for the basic idea). The existence of opposition and the possibility of dissent fulfill the function of proving the liberal orientation of a regime in comparison to other authoritarian regimes (Albrecht 2005: 391).

The way regional conditions influence the public perception of a regime's legitimacy brings an international dimension into the analytical framework.<sup>50</sup>

Such a **cross-national** advantage as a relational element is not a legitimizing factor of its own. Rather, it plays a role in the citizens' perception of each strategy when there are points of comparison. Cross-national comparisons have become even more relevant after the successful uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt. The example of regime change has become present in the minds of Arab citizens and poses a perpetual threat to incumbents. During the Arab uprisings, Michael Herb claims that "the monarchs benefited from the general sense among the Arab public that the monarchs were not so bad as the presidents" (Herb 2012). But this mechanism works also in a cross-time dimension. The empirical analysis seeks to show what role the "cross-national advantage" plays in the success of strategies, under which conditions it works and to what extent it is instrumentalized by the rulers themselves.

The typology presented above makes it possible to capture the variety of legitimating factors in every Arab state. All legitimization strategies within different types might be employed at the same time. This conceptualization tells us something about the quantity and variety of legitimization efforts. Although it does not allow for a weighting of factors, the relative importance of single strategies might be deduced from the frequency and intensity of legitimization measures.

The first advantage of this framework is its universal applicability because it is situated on a relatively high level of abstraction. Second, as it is open to content-wise specifications, it has the potential to integrate more factors and thus to offer more detailed infor-

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<sup>50</sup> Matters are complicated further when thinking of transnational personalities who themselves enjoy legitimacy in countries other than their own and thus negatively affect the citizens' perception of their national elites. This is especially true for figures with some kind of religious background, such as Hizbullah's leader Hassan Nasrullah (Schlumberger 2010: 244; Sedgwick 2010: 259ff.). This aspect, however, is only peripheral to my research questions and will thus not be tackled in this thesis.

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mation than other typologies without adding more categories. The framework aims at covering the complete repertoire of strategies at a given point in time.

As a further dimension of the framework, the **addressees** of the strategies are taken into account. The addressees that were mentioned in the working definition of legitimation are individuals, groups, or the whole population. The working definition of repression also differentiated between these three levels and specified opposition leaders, rank-and-file activists or the politically inactive population. Depending on the type of the strategy and its content-wise area, the relevant groups differ. Those groups or persons who play a role in the crises of legitimacy as either being part of the regime base or being challengers are taken into account in the empirical part.

For assessing the **success or failure of the strategies of political rule** under investigation, the addressees' possible reactions or responses are relevant. Table 3 gives an overview over the strategies and the addressees' different reactions. As explained before and demonstrated in figure 2 above in section 2.1.5, co-optation is seen as a more specific subset of legitimation. In the same vein, the successful result of co-optation, loyalty, is a subset of acceptance. On the negative side, the failure of co-optation (opposition) is a more specific subset of the failure of general legitimation strategies, which would be rejection on a more abstract level. Table 2.3 below illustrates the varieties of possible responses.

*Table 2.3: Strategies of Political Rule and Addressees' Responses*

Legitimation				Repression	
Success	Co-optation		Failure	Success	Failure
	Success	Failure			
Acceptance	Loyalty	Opposition	Rejection	Deterrence	P/rotest cont'd

Lastly, the **modes of legitimation** are a further dimension of analysis. I propose a structure along three modes of legitimation: a legal mode, a symbolic mode, and a policy mode. The first mode refers to institutionalized regulations, grasping in the first place formal institutions and legal changes. The second mode covers Easton's "statements" and deals with discourses and symbol politics, taking into account speeches, rituals, and

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other symbolic acts. The third mode describes material policies, referring to the more tangible output of the political system, which also includes informal institutions. The differentiation according to modes serves heuristic purposes. But it also reveals more detailed insights about the strategies. More than one mode can be employed at the same time for the implementation of a strategy, which can serve as an indicator for the seriousness which is ascribed to it. Other than a complementary logic, when various modes are used, contradictions between them may arise. Such contradictions between strategies within the same type of legitimation might be resolved when the potentially different addressees are taken into account.

All in all, the framework allows for an analysis of three levels (although depicted in two dimensions in Table 2.4) in that it categorizes strategies according to the underlying type of legitimacy, the mode of legitimation, and further differentiates between the strategies' addressees. It combines the analysis of three out of the four possible focuses of research on legitimacy that Schlumberger had proposed, except for a numeric or quantitative measurement (2010: 236ff.).

*Table 2.4: Framework: Types, Contents and Modes of Legitimation in Autocracies*

<b>Type</b>	<b>Mode Subtype/ Content</b>	Legal mode: legal regulations, formal institutions	Symbolic mode: discourse, symbol politics	Policy mode : material policies, output
<b>structural</b>				
<b>traditional</b>				
<b>identity- related</b>	nationalism			
	religion			
<b>material</b>	collectivism			
	neo-liberal modernization			
<b>personal</b>				

### 2.4.2. General Hypotheses

In the considerations above, various hypotheses have already been presented that refer to different points in the causal chain that is to be analyzed. First, most pertinent are those hypotheses that directly relate to the main research question of how successful different strategies of political rule have been. For the solution of the crisis of legitima-

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cy, it is decisive to use strategies that are successful in the end. Therefore few successful strategies may be more effective than many failing strategies. But still, the likelihood of achieving success rises with the number of strategies employed. The underlying assumption is that the more strategies are used, the higher the chance that at least some are successful and the greater the chances for overcoming crises of legitimacy ( $H_{\text{number}}$ ). When legitimation strategies are concentrated on a few addressees, the chance for success might be higher, but at the expense of the others' approval ( $H_{\text{fewaddressees}}$ ). As it is easier to prevent a shift of previously loyal citizens to the opposition than to attract former contenders, the co-optation that aims at strengthening the regime base is more likely to be successful than attempts at its widening ( $H_{\text{base}}$ ). Repression is expected to be more successful if it is precisely targeted and not employed in an indiscriminate way ( $H_{\text{target}}$ ). Moreover, when directed at groups that are excluded anyway, repression is more likely to be regarded as legitimate by others than if it targets the former regime base ( $H_{\text{legrepression}}$ ).

The more different addressees the strategies are directed towards, the higher is the chance for overall survival. However, inconsistencies might arise from the employment of contradictory strategies, as Linz (1964: 322) hints at the competition of legitimizing formulae, possibly affecting the success of otherwise working strategies ( $H_{\text{contradictions}}$ ). Therefore, special attention will be given to the question whether such strategies add up and thus complement or rather neutralize each other.

One hypothesis concerning the "cross-national advantage" is that under conditions of war or insecurity in a neighboring country, legitimacy is expected to rise since the population is reminded of their interest in physical security which their ruler can still provide ( $H_{\text{advantage}}$ ).

Moreover, the perception of a lack of viable alternatives as regards political personnel and the regime as such is expected to raise legitimacy ( $H_{\text{alternatives}}$ ).

More specific hypotheses that follow from the elaborations on the sources of legitimacy will be tested in the empirical comparison of a resource-rich republic versus a resource-poor monarchy. Traditional legitimation is more credible and thus more likely to be successful in a monarchy than in a republic ( $H_{\text{tradition}}$ ). Material legitimation can mainly be successful in those cases where no immediate regional comparative disadvantage is present ( $H_{\text{material}}$ ). It is however hard to foretell which combination of factors allows for

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more successful strategies overall, the empirical analysis can hopefully shed light on this question.

Apart from the immediate research question, some hypotheses have been discussed that are central to the protesters' calculations and are therefore relevant for the course of events and the regime strategies that are taken. Several hypotheses can be derived from Weyland's (2012) work, embedding the protests in a larger regional context. Reversing one of his arguments for mobilization, as long as the heuristic of representativeness does not take hold in a country, mass protests on a large scale are rather unlikely ( $H_{\text{representativeness}}$ ). However, the more citizens regard their domestic structures as similar to those in a case of successful protests, the more likely they are to engage in contentious action ( $H_{\text{similar}}$ ). Therefore, in the Arab context republics should generally be more prone to protests than monarchies ( $H_{\text{republic}}$ ). Moreover, the better organized the protest movement is, the less likely are radical demands (Weyland 2012: 924). This depends on the question of how quickly the demonstrators organize and whether they are unified at all ( $H_{\text{organization}}$ ).

While this multitude of hypotheses could be distilled from the diverse literature and own considerations, the focus of the empirical analysis later will not be on testing them all in a rigorous way. Rather, the aim of the comparison is to analyze the strategies and then relate them back to the hypotheses in a theory-building manner. They serve as a starting point for the inductive generation of new hypotheses.

### 2.4.3. Operationalization

The main task in the empirical analysis is not only to analyze the various regime strategies, but to elaborate if they match the preferences or demands of addressees and thus can be deemed successful. The overall aim is to show whether the strategies of legitimation actually work and thus legitimacy is attained or not and to what degree. The strategies within the framework of different types of legitimation sketched out in section 2.4. above will therefore be described along with the addressees of these strategies. Regarding all three modes, each strategy will be considered as a response to certain demands. When the measures aim at answering a demand of the addressees, an assessment of their effectiveness in meeting the respective need or satisfying the demand should enable us to state whether the strategy worked.



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**Legitimation:** Many attempts at operationalizing legitimacy take their point of departure in Easton's two types of support (Gerschewski 2013, Westle 1989). The work by Gerschewski comes closest to the research design proposed here in suggesting a generally applicable framework for measuring legitimation, repression, and co-optation. He follows the Eastonian subdivision in the subtypes of diffuse and specific support for measuring legitimacy. Specific support is operationalized as the elites' performance in the economic, social, and public order areas (Gerschewski 2013: 20). Diffuse support could according to Gerschewski be measured either "via qualitative assessments of country experts", or as the gap between "official legitimacy claims" and "the social reality" (Gerschewski 2013: 21). While such a gap of perceptions exists even in democracies, this approach seems too rough and abstract and therefore of little use for qualitative research. For the purpose of this thesis it makes more sense to go on a more fine-grained level of single measures and look for patterns after re-aggregating these factors. An alternative approach Gerschewski proposes is to measure the absence of legitimacy, quantified as the number of protests (Gerschewski 2013: 20). For studying the Arab uprisings as a time of politicization, the sheer number of protests is definitively significant. However, the intention, size, and demands of demonstrations are decisive for assessing whether they are indicative of a lack of diffuse support. Especially when it comes to socioeconomic demands, many protests that are counted are limited both in size and demands and bear little potential for unification, as they are organized by groups representing only particular interests. For assessing the symbolic mode of legitimation strategies, measuring the frame resonance would be the ideal way to find out about success or failure.<sup>51</sup> As it is empirically impossible to establish statements from directly asking the addressees, I constrain myself to evaluating the empirical credibility of the framing as one indicator for frame resonance as suggested in the literature (Benford & Snow 2000: 619ff.).

Regarding the various types of strategies, different indicators are important, some of which can be named, although for the purpose of this qualitative study a quantitative measurement is omitted. However, a deviance from the status quo before the crisis of legitimacy manifested itself in protests serves as the threshold for initiating the explication of strategies. For strategies of structural legitimation, processes of legislative re-

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<sup>51</sup> For an overview of the conceptual background of studying framing processes see i.a. Benford and Snow (2000).

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form are an indicator on various levels: the output as well as the discourse about new legal measures and the process of policy-making itself all need to be studied in order to assess the effectiveness of the measures. The triangulation of different modes within one type is important for detecting contradictions and therefore a good predictor for the actual success a single strategy can have in the first place.

The measures taken have to be embedded in the structural circumstances that are given in the respective country, which includes social, religious, ethnic, and economic conditions, besides rather historical factors such as the political culture and events of the recent past. One further aspect that should be paid attention to is whether the strategies are intensified or even new, thus demonstrating a qualitative difference of the response to the Arab uprisings in comparison to previous crises.

As regards the operationalization of **co-optation** as a subtype of legitimation, again a qualitative approach is adopted in looking at the co-opted groups or individuals. As already mentioned, Gerschewski conceptualizes co-optation differently from legitimation as formal institutionalization and informal patronage (2013: 22f.). While it is hard to measure such concepts anyway, these elements are included in the framework of legitimation presented above. According to the definition given above (2.1.5), the addressees of co-optation strategies are given a stake in the status quo, which decreases the probability that they will voice dissent or act against the regime. Co-optation can therefore be deemed successful when we observe a shift in behavior by the group or person addressed by the strategy towards more pro-regime actions and discourse. For already co-opted groups or individuals, the equivalent is when there appears to be reason and an opportunity for a shift towards a more oppositional stance, but this move is not taken.<sup>52</sup> This allows for the conclusion that co-optation has worked and continues to work.<sup>53</sup> Particularly the acceptance of official posts is a visible sign of co-optation. Whenever statements are available, it should be possible to trace whether people that used to display an antagonistic stance towards the regime moved to a more compliant one. For previously apolitical groups, the question is if people shifted from a silent stance to

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<sup>52</sup> Measurement in a strict methodological sense would require the identification of all potential addressees of co-optation beforehand, then finding out whom elites actually tried to co-opt, and finally assessing a change in the behavior of co-opted persons or groups after the measure has been put in place. As the analysis is done *ex post*, such a procedure is impossible to pursue in the context of this thesis.

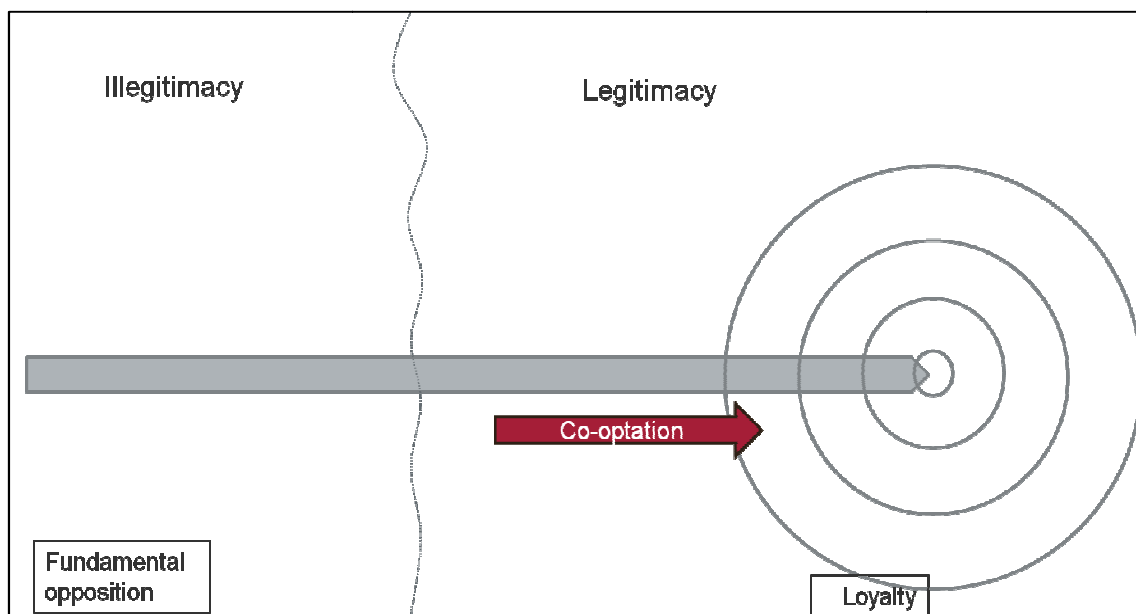
<sup>53</sup> I am grateful to Johannes Gerschewski for pointing out this aspect.

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openly supporting the regime.<sup>54</sup> Figure 2.3 below illustrates the mechanism of co-optation through drawing individuals or groups closer to the center of power, with the concentric circles depicting the elites grouped around the ruler.<sup>55</sup>

The issue of how sustainable this new attitude is also needs to be addressed. In order for co-optation to be deemed successful, it is assumed as working as long as no open opposition against the ruling elites is voiced. Failed co-optation in this sense means that although a strategy of co-optation was implemented by ruling elites, a person does not give up on his or her oppositional or dissenting viewpoint, or continues to voice it openly. Moreover, when the change in behavior intended by co-optation initially seems to be successful, but is not sustained for more than a few weeks or months, one should also speak of failure.

*Figure 2.3: Conceptualizing Co-optation*



Strategies of **repression** that do not in the first place serve the purpose of legitimation will be analyzed in separate chapters after the analysis of legitimation. Regarding the measurement of repression, only very vague indices are available.<sup>56</sup> For offering a rough

<sup>54</sup> The notion of support of course reminds us of Easton's definition of legitimacy as diffuse support, albeit in a more public or visible sense.

<sup>55</sup> The concentric circles are inspired by Bill & Leiden's depiction of patrimonial administration (1974: 113)

<sup>56</sup> Gerschewski, who studies hard and soft repression, suggests only the use of such large-N datasets (2013: 21).

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estimation, I have used the Political Terror Scale (Gibney, Cornett, Wood & Haschke 2014), which ranks countries from 1 (very low repression) to 5 (very high repression).<sup>57</sup> For both the incapacitating and restraining subtypes of repression, first attention will be given to the targets according to the working definition in order to evaluate how broadly or specifically targeted the measures are. For assessing the repression strategies in the restraining subtype, laws that restrict the civil freedoms, obstacles to political participation and oppositional activity, surveillance and intimidation of the population and the use of physical force will be considered. Managing dissent through emergency laws and trying activists in military instead of civil courts are common in security states with a high level of repression. Regarding the incapacitating subtype of repression, the number of detained, killed, and exiled persons during protests is relevant, as are the target groups. As any reliable sources are hard to obtain and measurement is especially difficult in this sensitive field, the focus will not be on an exhaustive empirical analysis based on quantitative data, but on the question whether the strategies are employed at all. So for some of the strategies, illustrative evidence will suffice to establish that relevant measures were taken.

As the analysis of legitimization strategies is guided by an addressee-oriented approach, the flip side of such measures is oftentimes the exclusion of other target groups – be it intentional or not. Therefore, the **delegitimizing** aspects of measures, wherever discernible, will be described in the same sections.

### 2.5. SUMMARY

This chapter has given an overview over the study of legitimacy in general and strategies of political rule in Arab autocracies in particular. I have presented various empirical-analytical approaches to legitimacy and established working definitions of legitimacy and legitimization, co-optation (as a subtype of legitimization) and repression. Moreover, various typologies have been presented and then reorganized and integrated into a distinct analytical framework. The result is a categorization of domestic strategies of legitimization according to the underlying type of legitimacy, mode and addressees, which is important to later evaluate their success or failure. In a further step, as this study seeks to give an exhaustive overview over different strategies, the analysis of le-

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<sup>57</sup> The CIRI dataset only provides data until 2011, so it does not cover the complete relevant time span.

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gitimation would be one-sided without taking also repression into account, an understudied factor in recent qualitative political science. A more fine-grained disaggregation of repression into different subtypes, again with a focus on addressees complements the analysis and enables an investigation of the interrelations between the different strategies.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

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The following short chapter briefly discusses some of the challenges that empirical research on strategies of political rule in the Arab world faces. It then goes on to present the methods used, which are process tracing and thick description. In the following, the comparative research design including the selection of cases is justified. Afterwards, the relevant sources are described. The chapter concludes with an overview over the structure that guides the empirical analyses in chapters 4 and 5.

#### **3.1. METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES**

In authoritarian polities characterized by opacity (Schedler 2013: 40), the black box of political decision-making is even blacker than elsewhere. This is not only true for finding out about how strategies of political rule are chosen, but even more so for those aspects of politics that include the opinions of citizens in authoritarian settings. First, it is hard to gather all the information necessary and relevant for understanding internal regime dynamics, especially when informality plays a decisive role in politics (Barros 2005). This is the case in all Arab countries. Regarding the second point, “objective” statistical data that could give information on the results of policy implementation is often manipulated, incomplete or simply non-existent. Choosing indicators in order to trace changes in the degree of legitimacy is extremely difficult already due to conceptual problems, but it is even exacerbated due to insufficient or biased opinion polls. Gathering information about the legitimation of a non-democratic regime is extremely sensitive as it touches the core of political rule. Incumbents themselves are aware of an inherent lack of legitimacy, in any case in comparison to democracies. Thus, although the central premise of this thesis is that non-democracies do enjoy a certain degree of legitimacy (Pawelka 2002: 437), it is hardly feasible to conduct survey research in the Arab world in a Western fashion, asking blunt questions about the attitudes of ordinary people towards their regimes (Tessler 1987, Tessler & Jamal 2006). In the MENA region such field research can hardly be conducted without provoking the suspicion of intelligence services. The degree of liberalism or openness of a political system is not even relevant for this matter. For example, citizens’ attitudes toward their authorities have been measured in various waves of the World Values Survey around the globe since

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1981. However, only few Arab countries have been covered since the fourth wave of data collection, which started in 1999. Yet, in some of the countries where the survey was allowed, specifically political questions were left out of the questionnaires (Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Iraq).

But even if data are available, they are hard to interpret. One reason for this is the way in which data is collected. The aim of the World Values Survey is a global comparison, which is difficult due to political, cultural and linguistic settings, in which the same answer can mean very different things. Apart from this general problem of cross-nationally transferring concepts and terms, it has already been shown that a large part of variation in results is rooted in methodological problems (Heath, Martin & Spreckelsen 2009: 310). The questionnaires used in Arab countries are in Modern Standard Arabic, which differs from vernacular language and in some cases even the respondents' native language. Citizens with low levels of education or illiterates are unfamiliar with the procedure of answering closed questions, which is aggravated by the formal language.<sup>58</sup> A cultural bias can distort the answers as it is considered polite to answer in the affirmative.

Another common problem in survey research, the effects of social expectancy, is reinforced by the effects of "political expectancy", that is respondents expecting intelligence services to learn about their answers due to restricted freedom of opinion and concealing their true opinions due to fear of the consequences.<sup>59</sup> For example, results that show overwhelming trust in security services can either mean that authorities are respected – or simply that the people who were asked didn't want to arouse any suspicion, did not trust the interviewer or the way their questions would be handled. This doesn't mean that all results of quantitative surveys have to be rejected altogether. It depends on how sensitive the topic under investigation is. Unfortunately, the question of legitimacy is the very heart of politically sensitive topics. Therefore, the validity and usefulness of

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<sup>58</sup> I happened to accompany a survey team conducting interviews with questionnaires in a refugee camp in Jordan, where the discrepancy between the style of questions, the way of asking and the real existing setting of the interviews became very tangible, with children screaming, the telephone ringing, neighbors passing by and a respondent who could not care less about the survey.

<sup>59</sup> The authors of a survey undertaken in Algeria indicate that some young men were unwilling to complete questionnaires, "saying that the Algerian authorities were the mastermind behind it and that the objective was mainly to single out extremists and control them" (Khemissi, Larémont & Taj Eddine 2012: 557).

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quantitatively collected material is limited and its pitfalls should always be borne in mind.

In case results are hard to believe, there are various ways to interpret them apart from the reasons given above. They might be captured in the Gramscian notion of hegemony, expressing the fact that one interpretation of the world actually attained predominance, or hegemony.<sup>60</sup> Political socialization and framing play their roles in shaping citizens' opinions up to a point at which it might become hard to tell the difference between one's own opinion and official discourse.

#### 3.2. METHODS USED

As described in the conceptual chapter above, the research interest of this thesis focuses on addressee-oriented strategies of political rule. Neither the identification of strategies, their categorization into the framework nor the evaluation of the success or failure of the specific measures can be tackled through quantitative measurement. Instead, a qualitative approach is necessary. For choosing an appropriate method, it is important to first establish what this thesis is about. This concerns the research question and the phenomenon to be studied about which more general statements are sought (George & Bennett 2005: 77).

The class of phenomena of which the research object is an example is the management of a crisis of legitimacy. More specifically, the subclass of this phenomenon is temporally defined as the distinct period of legitimacy crises during the Arab uprisings. For assessing the empirical success or failure of strategies of political rule, detailed case studies using the method of process tracing are well suited. Process tracing as it has been described by George and Bennett (2005), David Collier (2011) and others is a qualitative method that is especially apt for the social sciences as it serves to detect causal mechanisms, which is in line with the goal of this study. George and Bennett offer the following definition: "The process-tracing method attempts to identify the intervening causal process – the causal chain and causal mechanism – between an independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable" (2005: 206). It is worth noting that a thorough application of this method is by no means less demanding than the rigorous procedures in quantitative social sciences because ideally,

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<sup>60</sup> Schlumberger (2010: 235) hints at this aspect. See Martin (1997: 38ff.) for the interplay of hegemony and legitimation in Gramsci's thought.



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“*all* the intervening steps in a case must be as predicted by a hypothesis” (ibid., italics in original). One task of this study is therefore to derive as many hypotheses as possible from existing theories and deduce the implications that follow from them in order to test them against empirical evidence.

The overall aim of the analysis is a contribution to theory-building in the field of regime survival strategies. After establishing the empirical basis in the following chapters, it is necessary to move up the ladder of abstraction for explaining stability (Sartori 1991). In the words of George and Bennett, “[W]hen explanations for the outcome of individual cases vary, the results can be cumulated and contribute to the development of a rich, differentiated theory about that phenomenon” (2005: 216). Of course, there is always the danger of establishing competing theories that together overdetermine the empirical evidence (ibid.: 218). There are no straightforward solutions to this general problem of qualitative social science which is also connected to the small-N problem: there are too many variables and too few cases. The focused comparison of two cases takes up this criticism through the MDSO design (see below). Process-tracing is especially suitable for this thesis also because it “encourages the investigator to be sensitive to the possibility of equifinality” (ibid.: 215). This is in line with the logic underlying the most dissimilar systems design with similar outcome which is employed here.

Regarding the delicate question of causality in social science, “process-tracing is one means of attempting to get closer to the mechanisms or microfoundations behind observed phenomena” (George & Bennett 2005: 147). Regarding the levels of analysis, as has already been mentioned in the theoretical part, this study follows the principle of methodological individualism, which entails the so-called “micro-to-macro problem” of inferring from individuals’ actions to a systemic level (Coleman 1994: 6). In order to trace causal mechanisms, the micro level is indispensable for analyzing the impact of strategies and reactions towards them.

The procedure for building the causal process is to establish “a good narrative or [...] a timeline that lists the sequence of events. One can then explore the causal ideas embedded in the narratives, consider the kind of evidence that may confirm or disconfirm these ideas, and identify the tests appropriate for evaluating this evidence” (Collier 2011: 828f.). More precisely, “[e]vidence that a given stimulus caused a given response can be sought in the sequence and structure of events and/or in the testimony of actors explaining why they acted as they did” (Van Evera 1997: 65). Process tracing draws the re-

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searcher's attention to crucial events that mattered for the development as turning points, "which in turn permits good analysis of change and sequence" (Collier 2011: 824). This objective is also intended for studying the sequencing of legitimation and repression that is one of the focuses in the empirical chapters. Furthermore, these turning points will be analyzed through another method which originates from social anthropology, ethnographic description. Thick description as described by Clifford Geertz (1973) shall serve to understand the specific context in which protests took place in detailing the circumstances and course of events. In Geertz' own words, "we gain empirical access to [symbol systems] by inspecting events" (1973: 17). This procedure should be actor-oriented in "setting down the meaning particular social actions have for the actors whose actions they are" (Geertz 1973: 27).

Of course, process tracing is not the ultimate method for solving all problems of social sciences. One disadvantage is that it does not allow for statements about necessary or sufficient conditions and/or the relative weight of independent variables for an outcome (ibid.: 203).<sup>61</sup> And as a caveat, process tracing is a demanding method in the context of this thesis because "human agents [...] may be doing their best to conceal causal processes" (George & Bennett 2005: 207) – which is especially true in authoritarian regimes where decision-making processes are even more secretive than elsewhere, bringing us back to where we started.

#### 3.3. CASE SELECTION

For the purpose of comparison, I follow the logic of Przeworski and Teune's most dissimilar systems design (1970) in **choosing two cases** with a similar intensity as regards the crises of legitimacy and similar subsequent outcomes of regime survival under dissimilar structural conditions in terms of sources of legitimacy. A most dissimilar systems design usually serves to identify the one common independent variable that accounts for a similar outcome, given a multitude of differences. In this study, the primary goal is not to establish one independent variable that is responsible for the outcome. Rather, the aim is to look more closely into the causal mechanisms leading to a similar outcome and thus to contribute to theory-building. Following these research objectives, two cases will be selected as "building block" studies in the sense suggested by George

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<sup>61</sup> Causal mechanisms can be either sufficient or necessary, or both, in bringing about an outcome (George and Bennett 2005: 136; 145).

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and Bennett. These types of studies serve to “identify alternative causal paths to similar outcomes when equifinality is present” (George & Bennett 2005: 76). It makes sense to study more than a single case because a higher number of cases enables a researcher “to chart the repertoire of causal paths that lead to a given outcome and the conditions under which they occur – that is, to develop a typological theory” (ibid.: 207). Typological theorizing means “the development of contingent generalizations about combinations or configurations of variables” in the sense of identifying pathways that lead to certain outcomes (ibid.: 233). Again, a MDSO design fits very well as the focus lies on “the *variety* of causal patterns that can lead to the outcome of interest and determine the conditions under which these patterns occur” (ibid.: 244; italics are mine).

As regards this thesis, comparing a resource-rich republic with a resource-poor monarchy introduces the greatest possible variety in the foundations of legitimacy. Variance is thus present in the structures of legitimacy, the precondition for elites choosing strategies. The consequences as regards the scope of protests, demands, and the intensity of the crisis are similar. This comparative background of the analysis enhances the possibility for tracing the mechanisms of single strategies and to uncover in how far they are context-dependent. The design is supposed to show under what conditions similar strategies are successful or not and thus whether and how the potential variance materializes in actual policies.

As to **case selection**, existing cases of resource-poor monarchies include Jordan and Morocco; resource-rich republics are Algeria, Iraq, and Libya. The outcome of relative stability is definitely not present in Libya, where a civil war in combination with a military intervention resulted in a change of regime. Among the republics, Iraq represents a rather atypical case in the Arab uprisings, as the aftermath of the US invasion and the ensuing civil war together with power struggles between the different sects overshadowed the short-lived protests in terms of a regime crisis. This leaves us with Algeria as the only remaining case of a resource-rich republic that was affected by the Arab uprisings but preserved its regime stability. Among the poor monarchies, the Moroccan reform efforts have been hailed in an overly enthusiastic way, undermining the protest movement even by outside actors. The challenge the Moroccan king faces appears to be relatively manageable. Unlike Morocco, Jordan has seen a higher level of recurrent protests and therefore seems to have experienced a greater crisis of legitimacy. It qualifies also by its dire economic situation, especially due to its precarious geographical situa-

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tion next to Syria and its dependence on energy from external sources. These factors make it a more “shaky” case in need of good crisis management strategies. The setup of both cases in terms of classical types of legitimacy is thus:

Algeria: ideological and material legitimacy

Jordan: traditional and religious legitimacy

Scholarly works that explicitly compare these two countries are scarce. By and large, they touch upon more narrow and specific topics rather than macropolitical factors.<sup>62</sup> Mostly, in previous qualitative works the two states were chosen as case studies among other Arab countries, but the comparison hardly focused on the two.<sup>63</sup>

A thorough comparison of Jordan and Algeria during the Arab uprisings has not been undertaken up to this point. This is somewhat surprising since both states share similarities as regards their respective crises of legitimacy. Both Jordan and Algeria experienced a similar level of protests and a similar setup of protest movements, which could not build momentum in either state. Instead, the regimes have remained relatively stable. Both have also been described as already living their second “Arab spring” in 2011, after the democratic opening in Algeria in the elections of 1991-1992 following the 1988 riots and the political liberalization in Jordan following the 1987 bread riots. This parallel development also serves as a backdrop for a final within-case comparative checking that is supposed to shed light on the distinctiveness of strategies in the Arab uprisings – or in the negative case to show they are typical reactions to any regime crisis.

In the analysis that follows, special attention will be paid to the sequencing of different strategies of political rule. It is important to study both legitimation and repression in the context of the protests that posed the most tangible challenge to the respective regimes. Therefore, a detailed “thick description” of the key events in the sense of Geertz (1973) will be offered in both case studies, focusing on the most important demonstrations that were crucial for setting the course of the protest movements. In Jordan, this was the youth movement’s demonstration on March 24 and 25. In Algeria, the protest on February 11 was the key event that was decisive for later developments.

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<sup>62</sup> Recent examples include Gail Buttorf’s (2011) study on electoral boycott; Hogan & Cavatorta’s (2013) work on macroeconomic policy changes after critical junctures; again Cavatorta & Elananza (2008) on the relationship between religious and secular actors in civil society; and Tessler & Robbins (2007) on support for terrorist acts against the U.S. among ordinary citizens.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. e.g. Schlumberger (2004) and Tessler (2002).

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#### 3.4. SOURCES

To find out which strategies of legitimation are being used, I draw on openly available sources such as newspaper articles<sup>64</sup>, other media coverage, online news websites,<sup>65</sup> official statements, reports by local and international organizations, and secondary literature in order to analyze public discourses and to categorize policies according to the framework.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, I conducted field trips to Jordan in spring 2011 and to Algeria in fall 2013. Further sources are qualitative semi-structured interviews that I conducted with analysts from various academic disciplines and consultancy, journalists and activists in different societal organizations, ranging from current and former members of reform movements to functionaries of political parties and autonomous trade unions.<sup>67</sup> In Jordan, I conducted the interviews mostly in English, but sometimes partly in Arabic. In Algeria, the working language was French. During the interviews, I took extensive notes instead of recording the statements in the hope to encourage more open answers.<sup>68</sup> As authoritarian rule is still in place in both countries, I have decided to keep my interview partners anonymous and identify only their position.<sup>69</sup> In contrast, the names of speakers in public events and discussions are given in the footnotes.

Turning to the side of addressees, I resort to a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. Firstly, as to the attitude and behavior of citizens, existing surveys focusing on different topics are used, such as those conducted by i.a. the Center for Strategic Studies, Arab Barometer, and the International Republican Institute (IRI). This means that there is some data on the attitudes towards e.g. different political institutions available

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<sup>64</sup> For Jordan, especially the Jordan Times as the semi-official English daily newspaper is pertinent. For Algeria, the newspapers I used the most are El Watan, Liberté, and Le Quotidien d'Oran. Le Soir d'Algérie is also respected, although its appearance is less elitist. "[N]ewspapers help us to recapture the perspective of officials at the time." Deborah Welch Larson 2001: "Sources and Methods in Cold War History: The Need for a Theory-Based Archival Approach." In: Elman, Colin & Miriam Fendius Elman (eds.): *Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relation*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 327-350, cit. in George & Bennett (2005: 108, Fn 32).

<sup>65</sup> The most important online news platforms in Jordan are Ammonnews.net and Ammannet.org, while various Algerian platforms gather news from other sources, most prominently DjaZaïress (<http://www.djazairess.com>).

<sup>66</sup> I have tried to include relevant scholarly articles that were published until spring 2014.

<sup>67</sup> The lists of questions that guided the more general interviews especially at the beginning of my research in each country can be found in the appendix. In both countries, over a dozen interviews were conducted, in addition to more informal personal communication and participant observation in public events. As the field research took place during different phases of the uprisings – in Jordan at the height of protests, in Algeria more than two years afterwards – the contents of the interviews also differed. The questions posed to representatives of certain groups were more specific and usually only included some of these issues. Instead the groups' possibilities for action were a further pertinent topic in those interviews.

<sup>68</sup> On the manifold dilemmas of doing field research in the Middle East, cf. Clark (2006).

<sup>69</sup> The lists of interview partners is not included in this document, but can be provided upon request.

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for Jordan. In Algeria, however, there is no independent or even semi-independent research institute that conducts opinion polls (Dris-Aït Hamadouche 2009). Regarding the behavioral aspect, I include election results and turnout, as far as this can be evaluated as significant. Due to the empirical intricacies of authoritarian elections, these data are interpreted through qualitative assessment.

Also, as there are various addressees of legitimation strategies, it would not be advisable to conduct interviews with a random sample. Questioning a representative sample of each case for all strategies is a logistic impossibility and could not be attained due to lack of time and resources. Instead, I conducted in-depth interviews with representatives of different parts of the spectrum of society (see above) for purposes of illustration. As Geertz claims, “it is not necessary to know everything in order to understand something” (1973: 20).

According to the concept laid out above, a more qualitatively informed approach is employed, complementing aggregate data with interview-based information. Taking the different addressees apart from the population as a whole into account, strategically important groups are identified and their behavior analyzed, again using both the interviews and secondary sources. One of the challenges of this procedure was to identify and delimit relevant groups in a way that other researchers might approve of.

The questions also tackled the disadvantages of neighboring countries. This strategy served two purposes: On the one hand, an additional piece of the puzzle of legitimacy could be analyzed. On the other hand, the delicacy of direct political questions and answers – at least concerning the regime of the respective country – was avoided. The validity and range of the results of this strategy is of course limited. In order to increase the validity of results, as many different sources as possible will be taken into account for every issue area so that contradictions, especially those caused by biased answers in interviews, can be better detected.

Regarding the timing of my field research, the stay in Jordan fell exactly into the most exciting time when the public space was still opening up and a feeling of hope and new opportunities was around – more so in March than in April 2011. In Algeria, it was already much more difficult to find interview partners. Many former activists had disengaged and assumed new roles. Moreover, a feeling of suspicion kept even scholars from talking openly about politics or talking to a foreign researcher in the first place. In an-

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other sense it was possible to gain substantial insights because many interview partners held multiple positions in different relevant organizations and had a close network.

In a couple of instances, participant observation of public debates on different topics pertaining to political reform was feasible in Jordan. I attended various roundtable discussions organized by youth activists, a local radio network, and others, all in Arabic language. Additionally, I taught seminar sessions on legitimacy in two different M.A. level courses at the University of Jordan's Faculty of International Studies (in the absence of a political science department), during which I not only tried to find out what the students knew about the topic from a conceptual perspective, but also what they thought about it in the context of their own political situation. In a way, this setup implicitly resembled a focus group discussion. In Algeria, an informal talk with youth likewise turned into a focus group interview. Furthermore, I attended a press conference in which societal organizations presented a petition.

Whenever possible, different sources are triangulated to make sure that possibly biased sources are balanced out and that evidence gains validity.

#### 3.5. STRUCTURE OF THE ANALYSIS

In the following two empirical chapters, the two case studies will be preceded by an introductory part that outlines the countries' basic features before the period of investigation. This includes a short note on important historical backgrounds and the nature of the regime in place, referring to strategic groups and the setup of the population in general. Moreover, the regime's bases of legitimacy and the level of repression are presented (subchapter 1). Subchapter 2 deals with the protests before and during the Arab uprisings beginning in 2010/2011. It offers a thick description of the single most important demonstration in each country, which can be regarded as the critical point in the evolution of protests. Afterwards, the detailed analysis of the strategies of political rule follows along the typology developed in the conceptual chapter. Different structures are thinkable, such as following a chronological order, the mode of legitimation strategies, the addressee targeted, or the source of legitimacy. As the point of departure of this thesis focuses on the latter, this is the line along which the strategies are structured. The second dimension of structuring employed throughout the chapters is the mode. Within the subchapters, the procedure is thematic, which sometimes results in a chronological and sometimes addressee-related order. First, the challenge of the Arab uprisings to the

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respective type of legitimacy is delineated. Then, the analysis of the strategies proceeds according to the three modes of legitimation and explicates the various addressees as well. At the end of each section, the addressees' response is assessed, as far as this is possible, and summarized in a table that recapitulates the strategies employed towards different target groups. Following the part on legitimation, the strategies of repression are analyzed separately before a brief conclusion completes the respective chapter. Lastly, the **timeframe** taken into account for analyzing the strategies stretches from the first protests that can be counted as part of the Arab uprisings until the first parliamentary elections afterwards that followed renewed rules of the game and were presented as the outcome of a political reform process in both countries. The respective time spans are January 2011 through May 2012 in Algeria and January 2011 until January 2013 in Jordan.



### 4. EMPIRICAL STUDY I: JORDAN

#### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was created from scratch in the tumultuous beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>70</sup> Not all inhabitants are originally from within the country's borders (so-called Transjordanians), as various flows of refugees from Israel and Palestine, Iraq and Syria have swept the country ever since 1948. The bulk of Jordanian citizens today are of Palestinian origin.<sup>71</sup> Although many Palestinians still live in refugee camps, most have long become an integral part of Jordanian society supporting the status quo.<sup>72</sup> The regime's main base is among the Transjordanian tribes, who are overrepresented in the public sector, but also among well-situated businessmen of Palestinian descent.<sup>73</sup> According to the logic of rent-seeking and political favoritism, the Palestinian bourgeoisie belonging to the upper-class private sector is successful insofar that it belongs to networks including top bureaucrats and contacts to the palace (Wils 2003). Moreover, there are various ethnic and religious minorities, such as Chechens, Circassians, and Christians, who are loyal and are represented in parliament through quota seats. Another cleavage is between Bedouins (Transjordanian and formerly also Palestinian) and city dwellers, with over 80% now living in urban areas. Peters and Moore argue that, generally speaking, the Jordanian state builds on a broad ruling coalition (2009: 256).

Large minorities without special protection or participation are Iraqi and Syrian refugees, foreign laborers such as domestic workers from Asia and workers in construction and service from Egypt. Most citizens live in the capital Amman, whereas the rural areas – i.e. the desert in the south and provincial towns in the hilly areas in the north – are mostly inhabited by Transjordanian tribes.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> For a historical overview cf. Robins (2004) or Milton-Edwards & Hinchcliffe (2009).

<sup>71</sup> While reliable statistics are unavailable and sometimes official numbers of 43% of the total population are presented, it is widely assumed that the share of Palestinian Jordanians has reached about 70%.

<sup>72</sup> On the relationship between Transjordanians and Palestinians cf. among others Abu Odeh (1999), who looks at the international implications of the Palestinians' position, and Brand (1999) and Frisch (2002) who study the identity-related implications and management strategies from above. Lynch (1999) also takes into account the international dimension of the identity question, studying the consequences the state's identity has for its foreign policy in the public sphere (1999). He stresses the vast differences between different groups within Palestinian Jordanians (Lynch 2002: 33).

<sup>73</sup> On elite patterns and especially the "economization" of the elite cf. Bank and Schlumberger (2004).

<sup>74</sup> On tribes in Jordan cf. Fathi 1994.

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The reigning and ruling king of Jordan, Abdullah II, has been in power since 1999. Despite some hopes for liberalization upon his succession, the result of his first decade in power was “ten more years of autocracy” (Yom 2009). Jordan can be characterized as a linchpin monarchy (Herb 1999; in more detail cf. Lucas 2004: 108), which means that in contrast to the Gulf monarchies, the royal family does not dominate the political elite. Instead, the regime is neopatrimonial with the king ruling alone. Still, some members of the royal family exert influence over areas that are not part of high politics or the “ministries of sovereignty” (*wizarat as-siyada*) (Herb 1999: 8). Charity, religious and women’s organizations and associational life in general are dominated by royals, impeding the development of an independent and autonomous civil society (Brand 1995; Wiktorowicz 2002). Although formal institutions present the façade of a modern polity with a system of checks and balances, the king dominates all three branches of power. Decision making takes place in the Royal Court rather than the prime ministry, not even to mention parliament. Parliament consists of an upper house, the Senate, the members of which are designated by the king, mainly former politicians. The lower house is elected, however does not meet the principle of representation. It is dominated by tribal forces in the rural areas, which are massively overrepresented in comparison to the urban constituencies that are mostly inhabited by Palestinian Jordanians due to an electoral law that is designed to guarantee the formers’ predominance.<sup>75</sup> Instead of legislation, the main function of parliament is the maintenance of clientelist networks from the center to the regions. This mechanism has been described as “competitive clientelism” by Ellen Lust (2009) who found that usually those candidates are elected who are most likely to effectively draw state resources to their constituency. In this sense, the functional logic of parliament is not to check the executive, but to be as close as necessary and possible to where the allocation of resources is determined. Although official discourse maintains the monarchy was “constitutional”, the constitution gives all power to the king rather than circumscribing his competences.

Since the beginning of its existence, Jordan has been dependent on financial aid from abroad. In the absence of significant natural resources, political rents first from the United Kingdom and later from the USA and the Gulf states have ensured the king-

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<sup>75</sup> Already for the 1989 elections, Lucas showed the overrepresentation of tribal areas and religious/ethnic minorities (Lucas 2005: 29). A similar picture is still valid during the 2000 years: Ellen Lust presents an impressive table that confronts the lack of proportional representation, most drastically in the populous cities of Amman and Zarqa (Lust-Okar 2006: 464).

#### 4. EMPIRICAL STUDY I: JORDAN

dom's financial survival.<sup>76</sup> This income has been allocated according to the logic of a semi-rentier state through state-led development, employment in the public sector, investment in infrastructure, and subsidies on basic foodstuff, fuel, cooking gas, etc. in order to garner material legitimacy. However, in the wake of economic reform and structural adjustment programs imposed by international financial institutions, the state's welfare function has suffered. Instead, many kinship-based mutual aid organizations have formed to provide for their needy members, covering at least 40% of the population (Baylouny 2010: 100). The economic reforms have had ambiguous effects on the population: "the specific rights being actively advanced, prioritized, and protected by the government are those related to a neoliberal vision of economic growth (foreign investment and cosmopolitan consumerism), at the expense of other rights (such as the freedom of political expression, popular participation, and assembly for the purpose of political protest)" (Schwedler 2012: 266).

For most of the Arab world, **legitimacy** had become precarious long before mass protests toppled leaders. But in Jordan, a relatively higher number of possibilities for legitimation than in others states has been noted (cf. i.a. Schlumberger & Bank 2002).

One important source of legitimacy in Jordan is tradition. The monarchy has survived for almost a century, despite a tumultuous neighborhood and critical domestic developments. In Jordan, traditional legitimacy is interwoven with religion. Religious legitimation is available to the monarch as he is a member of the prophet's family, the Hashemites. Members of this tribe used to be the caretakers of the holy sites of Mecca and Medina for a millennium. This noble ancestry sets the Hashemites apart from other Muslims and therefore justified their authority over the inhabitants of Transjordan even as foreigners. In another vein, the Hashemites also played the leading role in the struggle for independence from the Ottomans during the Great Arab Revolt until 1918.<sup>77</sup> Although their success was thwarted by the Sykes-Picot-Agreement, the mandate charade led to a Hashemite emir in Transjordan who had credentials for the Arab cause. Not only official discourse upholds this historical fact, a recent comparative research project finds that "strong historical-religious claims to legitimate their rule" are decisive for the survival of both the Jordanian and Moroccan monarchies (Bank, Richter &

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<sup>76</sup> This dominant principle of foreign policy-making that sometimes led to counter-intuitive alliance-building was analyzed by Laurie Brand as the constant "search of budget security" (2002).

<sup>77</sup> On the consequences of colonialism on the national identity and institutional structures of today's Jordan cf. Massad (2001).

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Sunik 2013: 23). Russell Lucas (2005) also stresses the monarchical character of Jordanian authoritarianism especially with its ability to shape and manipulate institutions in a way to ensure regime survival. The monarchical form of rule is uncontested even among most democracy activists.

After a long period of political deadlock, in 1989 riots led to a political liberalization including the reinstatement of parliament, the formation of political parties on a limited scale, and a higher degree of civil liberties. This opening was subsequently reversed later, when the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty was concluded in 1994 and met harsh resistance by the Islamist movement.

The only political party that deserves the name is the Islamic Action Front (IAF), the political arm of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood. Its relation to the government can best be described as that of a “loyal opposition” (Milton-Edwards & Hinchcliffe 2009: 52). This means that the IAF does not seek the overthrow of the system in place, but works within it - as long as Israel is not concerned, since the party opposes the peace treaty. Although it has sometimes boycotted elections, the party leaders are eager to demonstrate their allegiance to the king not least by displaying his picture on their offices’ walls, just as it is the case in all public buildings. As a general tendency, more Jordanians of Palestinian background can be found in the IAF in comparison to the Transjordanian-dominated elite.

Among the official opposition, virtually nobody can be counted as anti-systemic. There are various small parties with different ideological backgrounds, the more active of them with a leftist ideology, but most of them are co-opted and even more regime-friendly than the IAF. The professional associations have often been cited as a source of opposition, comprising about 13% of the Jordanian workforce (Baylouny 2010: 88). They also have Islamist leanings in combination with Palestinian-Jordanian dominance and some degree of internal competition mechanisms through elections.<sup>78</sup>

The only tangible threat used to come from Salafi Jihadists, even though this was a security rather than a political problem.<sup>79</sup> However, the Iraqi suicide bombers that perpetrated the attacks on three hotels in Amman on November 9, 2005 acted upon the order of the Jordanian leader of al-Qa’ida in Iraq, Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi (Abu Rumman & Hanieh 2013: 327). The geographical situation with long borders in the desert allows for

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<sup>78</sup> On the professional associations’ relation to the state cf. Clark (2013).

<sup>79</sup> Their number is estimated to lie between 800 and 1,200 members (Abu Rumman & Hanieh 2013: 444).

#### 4. EMPIRICAL STUDY I: JORDAN

easy infiltration by foreign fighters. But on the political level, the potential challenge to the regime in place was very low.

Both in terms of security and employment, the different branches of the security apparatus play an important role in Jordan. The manpower of the armed forces, police and security stands at about half a million (Associated Press, 23 January 2013). In Sean Yom's words, "a quarter of the entire national labor force already carries a gun on the job" (2013: 132). The military has always been crucial to regime and even state survival. Beginning with the creation of Transjordan and the attainment of sovereignty through the expulsion of British officer Glubb in 1956 by the young king Hussein, the Arab legion has symbolized national strength. Before, it had served to integrate nomadic Bedouins into the newly founded state and to assure their loyalty (Watkins 2014: 35). Jordan is one of the most heavily militarized countries in the world, which can only be partly attributed to its precarious geographic situation.<sup>80</sup> Politically, the armed forces played a role in the expulsion of the PLO in the 1970 Black September. It was probably also vital in ensuring a smooth succession from Hussein to his unprepared son Abdullah II who did not have more than two weeks in his office as crown prince before ascending to the Hashemite throne. The king is the supreme commander of the armed forces and used to be commander of the Jordanian army's Special Forces, as he was a career soldier before surprisingly becoming crown prince and then king.<sup>81</sup> The Special Forces have been boosted in recent years, not least with the establishment of the high-tech "King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center" in 2009 where military units from around the world undergo anti-terror training.<sup>82</sup>

In 2006, the king had the first military parade in 30 years organized in order to celebrate Army Day (Schwedler 2012: 260). Many regard the army as a prestigious institution and the fact that it is dominated by Transjordanians from loyal tribes adds to its cohesion. In some rural areas, more citizens are employed in the armed forces than in any

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<sup>80</sup> Global Militarization Index 2012, online: [http://www.bicc.de/uploads/gmi/pdf/Global\\_Militarization\\_Index\\_2012\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_e.pdf](http://www.bicc.de/uploads/gmi/pdf/Global_Militarization_Index_2012_Fact_Sheet_e.pdf) rev. 16.03.12. Military expenditure in 2010 reached an all-time high in absolute numbers, equaling 5.20% of the GDP or around 20% of the annual budget, cf. <http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/jordan/military-expenditure> rev. 16.03.12.

<sup>81</sup> See Curtis Ryan's (2012) analysis of the Jordanian armed forces.

<sup>82</sup> A description of the fancy training facility can be found on the Center's homepage, online: <http://www.kasotc.com/home/index.php/about-kasotc/profile> rev. 10.06.14.

#### 4. EMPIRICAL STUDY I: JORDAN

other sector of the economy,<sup>83</sup> and more than a third of all Jordanians benefit directly or indirectly from a military health insurance.<sup>84</sup> So apart from traditional loyalty, material benefits add to the cohesion of the armed forces. Moreover, the National Committee of Military Veterans is said to represent no less than 140,000 members (Vogt 2012: 63). There are 87 supermarkets run by the “Military Consumer Corporation” which offer subsidized prices for military personnel (The Jordan Times, 24 June 2011).

Besides the army, the police’s manpower in the Public Security Directorate was estimated at about 25,000 (Tell 2004: 6). Since 2008, the newly created Gendarmerie (*darak*) forces have been separate from the regular police, numbering around 15,000 personnel. They perform special operations and are active among other things in riot control.<sup>85</sup>

The third pillar of security, the intelligence service looms large and is one of the forces that dominate also the political sphere through extensive surveillance and interference in citizens’ everyday life.<sup>86</sup> The General Intelligence Department (GID) was not least involved in rigging the 2007 parliamentary elections.<sup>87</sup> But even on a more general level, societal activities are monitored through umbrella organizations and tight regulations leaving hardly any space for autonomous organization, so that Wiktorowicz (2000) talks of “Civil Society as Social Control”.

The State Security Court, a military court, has extensive jurisdiction even over civilians in manifold areas considered to affect security in its broadest sense. The offences of “undermining the political regime” and “inciting resistance” to the government in article 149 of the penal code are listed in the “terrorism” section (Human Rights Watch 2012b).

Thousands of civilians were detained without trial (Amnesty International 2011). Torture is used as “widespread and routine practice” (UN Office of the High Commissioner

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<sup>83</sup> The most significant example is 57% of all employed males in the northern city of Ajloun working in “Public Administration and Defence”, cf. Jordanian Department of Statistics, 2010, online: [http://www.dos.gov.jo/owa-user/owa/emp\\_unemp\\_y.show\\_tables1\\_y?lang=E&year1=2010&t\\_no=26](http://www.dos.gov.jo/owa-user/owa/emp_unemp_y.show_tables1_y?lang=E&year1=2010&t_no=26) rev. 16.03.12.

<sup>84</sup> This number is taken from the Jordanian Department of Statistics, online: [http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos\\_home\\_a/main/linked-html/cen04\\_3.pdf/table\\_3\\_13.pdf](http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_a/main/linked-html/cen04_3.pdf/table_3_13.pdf) rev. 16.03.2012. The number of armed forces personnel was 110,500, forming an all-time low in the percentage of the work force with 6.8% in 2011. Cf. <http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/jordan/armed-forces-personnel> rev. 20.05.14.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. <http://www.fiep.org/member-forces/darak-forces-jordan/> rev. 21.06.14.

<sup>86</sup> According to a political scientist, they are the single most important institution influencing Jordanian political life in general, Muhammad al-Masri, HashtagDebates, 11 April 2011, Amman.

<sup>87</sup> Personal communication with social scientists, April 2011, Amman.

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for Human Rights 2010: 3). In 2010, 321 complaints of torture were filed with the Board of Grievances of the Public Security Directorate. However, only in eleven cases were police officers actually tried, and this took place under the internal jurisdiction of the Police Court (Ammannet, 30 June 2011).

Up to the beginning of the protests, in the regional context the regime derived part of its legitimacy from the fact that 7 was not as harsh as in neighboring states, most notably Syria. This fact was pointed out as a positive factor by many interview partners even before the civil war started in Syria.<sup>88</sup> While incapacitating repression is not as overt as in other countries, restraining repression has still remained on a high level under King Abdullah's rule. From 2005 through 2010, the Political Terror Scale rating was predominantly 3 (5 denoting the highest level of repression), while the Amnesty International reports of 2008 and 2010 even suggested a rating of 4 (Gibney, Cornett, Wood & Haschke 2014).

### 4.2. THE PROTESTS IN JORDAN

#### 4.2.1. Protests before the Arab Uprisings

The political climate in Jordan had begun to become rougher already in 2010 when angry military veterans protested against the allegedly growing influence of Palestinians and especially targeted the queen.<sup>89</sup> These attacks not on the king himself, but on the person closest to him were some of the first signs of an unusual emerging threat to the status quo.

As in other Arab countries, the initial reason for demonstrations in Jordan was the socio-economic situation. The youth unemployment rates were considerable, in 2010 according to official numbers 23.8% of young men from 15-24 years were unemployed, of young women even 46.8%.<sup>90</sup> At the same time, the youth bulge was also enormous, as of the total population counting approximately 6,249,000 Jordanians, 37.3% were under the age of 15 (Jordan Statistical Yearbook 2012: ج). In Jordan, the cost of living is among the highest in the Arab world, while wages are modest. The average annual in-

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<sup>88</sup> Personal interviews in Amman, March and April 2011.

<sup>89</sup> A counter-petition initiated by former prime minister and GID director Ahmad Obeidat was signed by many more, cf. David 2010 and the website, online: <http://www.chapter7jordan.org/signatures.html> rev. 11.05.14.

<sup>90</sup> All numbers are taken from the Jordanian Department of Statistics, online: [http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos\\_home\\_e/main/](http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_e/main/) rev. 02.05.14.

#### 4. EMPIRICAL STUDY I: JORDAN

come from employment per household was 3,842 JD in 2010.<sup>91</sup> While in Amman, the income was slightly higher, living costs in the capital amount to Western standards. The number of socioeconomic protests rose, with day laborers in the public sector who could easily and instantly be fired staging regular sit-ins (Adely 2012: 36).

In November 2010, parliamentary elections were held as the king had dissolved the lower house one year before due to allegations of corruption among deputies. The Islamic Action Front boycotted the elections and subsequently lost the six mandates it had won in the 2007 elections, which had already been regarded as extremely manipulated (Al Arabiya, 4 November 2010). These were signs of a growing alienation between the IAF and regime actors (Bank 2010: 5). In December 2010, the government headed by Prime Minister Samir ar-Rifai won a vote of confidence in the lower house with a record 111 out of 119 votes (The Jordan Times, 24 December 2010). This was regarded as a ridiculous “theater”, with one analyst talking of a one-party parliament (The Black Iris, 26 December 2010), further eroding the perceived legitimacy of political institutions.

##### 4.2.2. The Beginning of the Arab Uprisings in Jordan

In the wake of anti-regime protests in Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt, protesters took to the streets in Jordan as well. However, protesting groups and their grievances were manifold and never unified at any crucial time to attain the momentum that was reached in Egypt in February 2011.

After the first demonstrations in Tunisia, the Arab uprisings in Jordan started off with protesting day laborers led by Muhammad Sunayd in the provincial town of Dhiban in the beginning of January 2011. According to a political observer, the location of this first protest was the result of a conscious choice to “test” what the reactions would be like before becoming active in the large cities.<sup>92</sup> The protest movement consisted of public sector workers subcontracted by private firms, thus lacking any employment security despite working for ministries (Adely 2012: 36). They demonstrated for better work conditions, against a hike in prices, unemployment and corruption. According to official statistics, 44.6% of working Jordanians earned less than 300 JD per month in

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<sup>91</sup> Cf. the Jordanian Department of Statistics, online: [http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos\\_home\\_e/main/](http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_e/main/) rev. 02.05.14.

<sup>92</sup> Personal interview, April 2011, Amman.



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2011 (The Jordan Times, 6 March 2013). Taking the high costs for living into account, such an amount of money is not even enough for one person, not to speak of providing for a family. Economic grievances were the primary motive for taking to the streets, but political demands were added soon. Various groups began to form, focusing on different topics. The awareness of precarious living conditions was raised, e.g. in a newspaper article on a university graduate who works as a cleaner (Al-Ghad, 3 March 2011). As the dynamic of protests unfolded, just like in other countries, the demands did not remain restricted to higher wages, subventions on basic foodstuff, or affordable housing. After some time, political demands added to economic grievances.

Over the spring months, many loosely organized groups calling for reform took to the streets. On 14 January, a Friday protest in downtown Amman was organized as the “day of rage” (Bustani 2011). The student association *Dabahtoona* (literal meaning: “you have slaughtered us”) protested particularly against the security services’ interference in university life.<sup>93</sup> One of the other movements that formed, the “Movement of the 1952 Constitution”, wanted the political system to become a constitutional monarchy in the real meaning of the concept. In the activists’ view, the Jordanian constitution in its original 1952 version had been rather liberal from the outset and was only subsequently amended to vest all powers in the king. Another loose associations of interest groups called itself “The Jordanian Campaign for Change – *Jayeen*” (roughly: “we are coming”), although the goal remained diffuse at first (Ryan 2011a: 382). The most important demand that was voiced was the downfall of the government led by Samir ar-Rifa’i, who was considered too neo-liberal and detached from average Jordanians. After a few weeks, the IAF joined the weekly Friday protests in the capital, further politicizing the protests. Although the prime minister was sacked quite swiftly on 1 February, the protest movements did not stop their actions. In the largest demonstration in mid-February 2011, one week after Mubarak’s fall, some 18,000 protested on the streets of downtown Amman close to the King Hussein mosque.<sup>94</sup> The police forces tried to convey a benign image through handing out water and juice to protesters instead of employing water cannons, as their counterparts in other countries did, as if to demonstrate once more the exceptional harmony in Jordan (Bustani 2011).

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<sup>93</sup> *Dabahtoona* had already been active since 2008.

<sup>94</sup> In an interview, a youth activist himself assessed this number as not really impressive, April 2011, Amman.

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Most demands did not call for the open overthrow of the system, but for political reform. While protesters claimed they did not want the king to abdicate, nevertheless on an analytical level the introduction of a solely representative function of the monarch would equal a regime change. Still, the self-restraint in wording and actions made the reform movements look comparatively harmonious. It is also important to note that the protesters remained peaceful. Moreover, the role of the pervasive security services in political and everyday life was discussed openly. A further important demand was ending corruption.

The organizers of the demonstrations included political parties of various orientations, such as communists, Baath parties, and the IAF. Just as in Egypt, however, the Islamists kept low profile during protests. Bustani cites a Muslim Brotherhood statement that stressed “the Islamists in Jordan call for reform, not a total change. We acknowledge the legitimacy of the regime” (Bustani 2011). The calls for political reform centered on the role of existing political institutions, which should gain more weight and representativeness. An especially striking lack of legitimacy was apparent in the electoral law, which protesters demanded to be more representative of the population. Such changes, however, would dampen the influence of the tribes and thus disenfranchise the king’s former power base.

The more significant number of protests was organized by the different professional associations, who are well organized in contrast to other institutions in Jordan, or professional groups demanding the right to organize. Moreover, demonstrations were held in front of different embassies to show solidarity with citizens in other Arab countries, most prominently Egypt and later also Syria.

What was remarkable about these demonstrations was that a previously depoliticized and disillusioned population took to the streets.<sup>95</sup> More importantly, during the months following the first demonstrations, “some very important red lines have been crossed”, e.g. as regards criticism of the royal family.<sup>96</sup> Both the scope and some of the forms of contentious politics were unprecedented, culminating in the development of a youth movement that tried to emulate its counterparts in other Arab countries.

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<sup>95</sup> Personal interview with political scientist, March 2011, Amman.

<sup>96</sup> Personal interview with social scientist, March 2011, Amman.

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### 4.2.3. The March 24 Youth

The Jordanian youth movement held its key sit-in on March 24, taking on the name of this date, just as many movements in the other Arab countries that experienced protests (Arabic: *shabab 24 adhar*). The March 24 Youth served as a loose umbrella for previously formed organizations such as Jayeen and the 1952 Constitution movement, but according to their self-image anybody who attended the sit-in belonged to the group. There was no strongly institutionalized structure. The demonstration by the self-proclaimed “free youth of Jordan” had been announced about a week earlier through a newly set up Facebook site which quickly gained more than 30,000 “likes”.<sup>97</sup> The youth’s demands were summed up under the slogan “The people want the reform of the regime” (*al-sha’b yurid islah an-nizam*), thus departing from the pan-Arab demand for a “downfall of the regime” and adapting it to the monarchic Jordanian context. More specifically, the desired reforms included: “1. a parliament that represents the people, 2. an elected national government, 3. real constitutional reforms, 4. trying the corrupt in court, 5. reform of the tax system, 6. lifting the security grip, 7. the realization of national unity”.<sup>98</sup> The youth’s plan was to stage an indeterminate sit-in, to be held until their demands were met. Obviously, not so much the size or demands of the protest, but the announcement of an open-end demonstration seemed to be a challenge that threatened the status quo (Tobin 2012: 102). The location of the protest at the “Ministry of Interior circle” (*duwwar ad-dakhiliya*) was very symbolic in many respects. It took place where reform is needed the most and where the introduction of a democratic order would make a large difference. Still, the location under an overpass bridge of the roundabout epitomized the lack of public space in which larger gatherings were possible, let alone permitted.

In the attempt to demonstrate the movement’s unifying and pan-Jordanian character, no banners, flags or political symbols other than the national flag were allowed on the protest site. Slogans that were chanted included “the people want the dissolution of parliament”, “the people want an elected government”, “with our souls, with our blood we

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<sup>97</sup> The website can still be accessed as of spring 2014 (<https://www.facebook.com/shbab.march.24>)

<sup>98</sup> Author’s translation of the demands, online:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=118249891585338&set=o.117575471653383&type=1&theater rev. 01.05.14.>

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sacrifice for you, oh Jordan”, and “leave us alone, intelligence service”.<sup>99</sup> All of these slogans remained within the limits set by the demands presented above.

The March 24 Youth had their sit-in broadcast online through a video live stream. The peaceful protesters defied the heavy rain that day, but the next day, the demonstration turned violent when another group showed up protesting against them. The protesters, less than 2,000, were far outnumbered by self-proclaimed “loyalists” who simultaneously gathered at a pro-regime demonstration in the King Hussein Park, numbering 20,000 participants from all over the country, some of them allegedly brought in buses from the southern regions.<sup>100</sup> The youth movement’s tent camp on the Interior Ministry Circle was not large in terms of size, as many Friday marches in the weeks before had been larger. Although the sit-in did not pose an immediate threat to anything except the flow of traffic, it was attacked by thugs and participants of the loyalist demonstration. It is noteworthy that although the streets had been closed off and were secured by police, the thugs were allowed to pass through to the protesters. On March 25, even the gendarmie forces assisted the thugs in violently dispersing the demonstration, using water cannons, sticks and batons. The live stream then showed young thugs (and partly *darak* forces) dancing to nationalist songs, celebrating their victory.

The forceful end of the sit-in left at least one person dead, a middle-aged man who according to official statements had suffered a heart attack and thus died of a natural death, which was denied by family members who claimed the police had beaten him (The Jordan Times, 30 March 2011). Many more suffered injuries, mainly from rocks that had been thrown at them. 87 protesters were arrested for resisting police officers and sent to the Criminal Court, rather than any of the assailants (Ammonnews, 8 April 2011). The vilification of peaceful demonstrators was met with indifference by large parts of the population.

Even a member of the March 24 Youth admitted that the movement suffered from a communication problem relating to a wider audience and making their concerns understood.<sup>101</sup> Other young people complained that the demands had not been articulated publicly and clearly enough beforehand.<sup>102</sup> Also, the clenched fist which was the revolu-

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<sup>99</sup> Personal interview with youth activist, April 2011, Amman.

<sup>100</sup> A political observer claimed they were mainly brought to Amman from Maan and Wadi Araba, southern tribal strongholds of the regime.

<sup>101</sup> Personal interview, April 2011, Amman.

<sup>102</sup> Personal communication, March 2011, Amman.

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tionary symbol on the Facebook site might not have been the ideal picture to convince the broader public of the peaceful and gradual approach the March 24 Youth actually pursued. This led to mistrust by the general population and a susceptibility to believe official discourse.

##### 4.2.4. The aftermath and the subsequent development of protests

After March 25 the gendarmerie was increasingly regarded as a problem<sup>103</sup> and it tried therefore to regain its standing. Even a report by the government-affiliated National Centre for Human Rights “noted that the Gendarmerie used force to end the sit-in”, but of course presented this as legitimate and necessary (The Jordan Times, 20 April 2011). It also accused the protesters of having “raised slogans that were against national unity” (ibid.).

The radical Islamist strand of jihadist Salafis had been allowed to appear on the political stage in 2011, of which they made use in calling for the release of prisoners and for the first time employing a more political language (Abu Rumman & Hanieh 2013: 434). On April 12, they staged a peaceful demonstration at the *duwwar ad-dakhiliyah* in Amman, where they were met by *darak* forces wearing combat gear and face masks. On April 15, they held a demonstration in the northern industrial city of Zarqa and were subsequently attacked by conspicuously unarmed gendarmerie personnel and thugs. In the clashes, some 80 security officials claimed to be injured – even though injuries caused by teargas can hardly be attributed to the Salafis (The Jordan Times, 17 April 2011). It was quite obvious that this clash was staged in order to convince the broader population of the threat the Salafis posed and to gain sympathy for security personnel.

One of the most drastic examples of regional demonstration effects was the self-immolation of a 45-year old man on April 7, 2011, in front of the Prime Ministry, following the example of Mohammad Bouazizi of Tunisia’s Sidi Bouzid (Ammannet, 7 April 2011). The sad event remained without consequence, however. During the time span under consideration, three further men died after having set themselves on fire, protesting against their suffering from economic hardship.

A much anticipated and noteworthy development of the protest movement followed in May 2011. Former prime minister and director of the intelligence service Ahmad

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<sup>103</sup> According to a statement by lawyer Sufian Obeidat during the 4th event of the HashtagDebates on “Reform in the shadow of the security apparatus”, Amman, 11 April 2011.

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Obeidat attempted to unify the rather diverse protest camp (the IAF, the youth movement, leftist parties, women's union) under one umbrella organization called the National Front for Reform. Beginning in summer, the National Front for Reform staged various demonstrations. This development of a former "insider" uniting different opposition groups seemed to give a boost to the protest movement and to pose a threat to the regime. However, its influence was limited due to its elitist and urban base. Political protests were held regularly throughout the year, but without attracting a critical mass of followers. Instead, they were supposed to demonstrate visibility in the sense of spectacle politics (Tobin 2012: 102).

Still more dangerous were protests by tribes in the rural regions, described by Yom as "the most credible threat during the Arab uprisings" (2014: 236). These former backbones of the regime tried to resist the marginalization that resulted from neoliberal policies and centralization (International Crisis Group 2012). In various provincial cities, approximately forty youth groups formed under the banner of *Hirak*, which literally means movements (Yom 2014: 234). Notably, the tribal youth emerged as an actor with political demands and rejected the rent-seeking mentality that their more established relatives displayed (ibid.: 246). The *Hirak* approach could be observed in demonstrations which especially addressed privatizations on a so-called "Friday to return lands", referring to tribe-owned land from the Ottoman time (The Jordan Times, 23 December 2011).

In June 2011, disenchanted youth in the southern town of Tafileh threw bottles at the king's motorcade while he visited the governorate. In order to avoid the image of being attacked by the inhabitants of the town that all other Jordanians joke about as provincial, official reports only talked of a cheering crowd. Meanwhile, the Amman office of Agence France Presse, which had published the different reading, was devastated by unidentified persons (The Jordan Times, 16 June 2011; Tobin 2012: 102).

The *Hirak* and the National Front for Reform joined forces in staging protests, but splits between the different groups occurred soon enough, in part sown by regime forces.<sup>104</sup> In October 2011, the attacks on reform activists grew harsher. Laith Shubailat, an oppositional Islamist, was attacked by thugs blocking his way to a reform rally in the village of Sakeb near Jerash (The Jordan Times, 3 October 2011). Stones were thrown at some

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<sup>104</sup> On previous coalitions cutting through ideological differences in Jordan, which tend to be gatherings rather than strongly institutionalized movements, cf. Clark (2010: 115).

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1,000 people waiting for Shubailat's speech (ibid.). Few weeks later, *Hirak* members of different tribes held a conference on combating corruption jointly with the National Front for Reform, including IAF representatives, in Salhoub close to Jerash (Al Akhbar, 18 October 2011). Ahmed Obeidat, who was also present, reported that he had been warned in advance not to attend the meeting (ibid.). The participants were attacked by thugs who fired shots and demolished cars, injuring some thirty of the conference participants (The Jordan Times, 18 October 2011). The mistrust between rather urban Islamists and tribal forces could not be removed, with the *Hirak* fearing that the Muslim Brotherhood pursued its own agenda (Yom 2014: 246). In a large rally in October 2012, the National Front for Reform and professional associations along with the Karak branch of the *Hirak* surprisingly did not participate, with the IAF providing the bulk of the 10,000 protesters (The Jordan Times, 8 October 2012). In November 2012, the alliance finally split, as the small leftist parties decided to run in the parliamentary elections instead of heeding the Front's call for boycott (The Jordan Times, 13 November 2012). Apart from the pro-reform movement, other protesting groups were even more vocal when taking to the streets. Most notably, the members of different professional associations or groups protested in order to have their economic and social demands fulfilled. In 2012, an estimated total of 760,000 workers participated in various forms of contentious action, which is more than 10% of the total population (The Jordan Times, 21 February 2013). The bulk of the protests remained socioeconomic. Finally, the fuel riots in November 2012 constituted the most heated and violent part of street politics in Jordan. After an attempt to cut subsidies on fuel and gas, which is also used for cooking, the fuel prices rose by 15%, while the price for cooking gas cylinders rose from 6 to 10 JD. Teachers went on strike in solidarity (The Jordan Times, 15 November 2012). The riots were at first thought to be a game-changing next level of protests since for the first time in Amman, the slogan "the people want the downfall of the regime" was chanted in front of the Ministry of Interior (The New York Times, 13 November 2012).<sup>105</sup> However, no official protesting group embraced this extreme demand. Instead, the organized opposition soon resorted to the usual calls for reform.

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<sup>105</sup> According to Sean Yom, the slogan had been prevalent in some provincial *Hirak* protests (2014: 234).

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### 4.3. STRATEGIES OF LEGITIMATION IN JORDAN<sup>106</sup>

#### 4.3.1. Structural Legitimation

As discussed above, many of the reform protesters' demands pertained to structural issues and the relative weight of political institutions. The king responded to the challenge of facing protests with demands increasing almost each week by using rather old-fashioned tactics.

##### **Legal mode**

One immediate response to the demonstrators' demands was the sacking of the unpopular Rifa'i government, only few weeks after it had gained a ridiculously high number of votes of confidence in parliament. However, the decision to replace him with Ma'rouf al-Bakhit, who was known to be a hardline military officer, did not evoke any positive reactions.<sup>107</sup>

The next step was an amendment of the public gatherings law which changed the system of organizing public protests to simply notifying the authorities in advance instead of seeking their explicit permission (The Jordan Times, 24 March 2011). While the elimination of the previous regulation was a positive sign for the protest movement, another controversial clause was introduced. The definition of public gathering was stretched to private events that "discuss any topic related to public policy" (The Jordan Times, 27 April 2011). This stipulation illegalizes any discussion of politics about which the ministry of interior is not informed.

The most important measure that signaled actual reform was the establishment of a **National Dialogue Committee** (NDC) in March 2011. The NDC's task consisted in formulating drafts for a new elections law and a political parties law, as these two areas were deemed crucial for tackling potential allegations of illegitimacy.<sup>108</sup> After the only well-organized political party in Jordan, the IAF, had boycotted the November 2010 parliamentary elections, the representativeness of parliament was even lower than it would have been in case of its participation (Lust & Hourani 2011). Fifty-three individuals were chosen to participate in the NDC, the establishment of which was ordered by the prime minister. The personalities picked were mostly politicians and officials, but

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<sup>106</sup> Some parts of the analysis that refer to co-optation strategies during early 2011 are taken from a conference paper that is currently under review for publication (Josua 2012).

<sup>107</sup> Various personal interviews, March 2011, Amman.

<sup>108</sup> Survey results show that both parliament and political parties rank among the least trusted institutions in Jordan (Arab Barometer 2005).



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also included representatives of syndicates and other unions as well as journalists. Some Islamists from the IAF were also designated, but they never showed up at the meetings, citing that they had not been asked to participate.<sup>109</sup> The creation of the NDC was an attempt at co-opting influential individuals who were not yet part of the regime elite. The “reformist bloc” of fifteen relatively “new faces” was enthusiastic at first because of the potential for real change that the regional window of opportunity had opened, although the committee’s mandate was limited and the process of its creation was criticized: they would have preferred a creation through the king himself. Inside the NDC, interesting dynamics were observable. Some of its members fought for the right to formulate general principles for political reform that might serve as a blueprint for introducing constitutional changes.<sup>110</sup> A youth activist suggested that through these “reformers”, the March 24 Youth had the possibility to influence the NDC in the absence of any other legitimate form for them to freely express their opinions.<sup>111</sup> However, he already doubted the NDC’s mandate for really tackling the decisive questions and the king’s readiness to renounce some of his competences.

Also members of parliament felt even more marginalized after the NDC subcommittees had taken up their work of proposing changes to the electoral and political parties law as well as drafting constitutional amendments. In every aspect, the NDC resembled previous committees that had been called into existence since the beginning of the 1990s, such as the National Charter Committee in 1990 and the Jordan First Committee in 2002 (Lucas 2008: 287ff.; Bank 2004: 165). Somewhat expectedly, when it came to the actual formulation of recommendations for the legal modifications, the initial dynamic that had characterized the NDC was stopped by the overwhelming majority of regime elites in all subcommittees. Furthermore, in order to prevent any substantial implementation of the potentially far-reaching recommendations, another committee was established, this time by a royal decree. The task of the new ten-member “Royal Committee on Constitutional Review” was to examine the NDC’s recommendations and to draft the actual laws to be submitted to parliament. The fact that this committee held its first meeting at the Royal Court shows the higher importance that was attributed to it (The Jordan Times, 3 May 2011). The establishment of the additional committee was resent-

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<sup>109</sup> The members’ names simply appeared in the newspapers. Personal interview with high-ranking IAF member, April 2011, Amman.

<sup>110</sup> Personal interview with a member of the NDC, April 2011, Amman.

<sup>111</sup> Personal interview, April 2011, Amman.

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ed by NDC members and buried their last hopes about any tangible outcome of their work.

The measure that was presented as the most comprehensive legal change was the **constitutional reform**. Even though in authoritarian systems the letter of laws hardly matters in everyday politics<sup>112</sup>, the symbolic power of acknowledging a development towards the separation of powers would matter for legitimacy. Personalities close to incumbent elites were bragging about the high number of changed articles (forty-two, one third of all articles), praising it as the most comprehensive update in Jordanian history, or even a “quantum leap” (The Jordan Times, 16 August 2011). However, the contents of these articles were not equally high-profile. The main novelties were the introduction of an Independent Elections Commission (IEC), the establishment of a constitutional court, and some limitations on the possibility to rule without parliament. Most importantly, “[t]here is no mention of even a symbolic restriction of the king’s absolute power” (Bank 2012: 32). His competences are left intact, including the right to appoint the prime minister (article 35).

Chapter 5 (articles 58-61) of the revised constitution stipulates the establishment of a **Constitutional Court** to “monitor the constitutionality of laws and regulations in force” (The Jordan Times, 8 October 2012). Theoretically, the establishment of a constitutional court might seem as a significant step towards the separation of powers. In practice, its impact is hardly felt since according to article 60 only the two chambers of parliament or the government can appeal to the court.<sup>113</sup> In October 2012, the Constitutional Court replaced the previously existing Higher Council for the Interpretation of the Constitution, which had been a paper tiger. As usually, the official press cited an elitist journalist with the words that the move ““fulfil[led] the requests of the popular movements who have been calling for political reform”” (ibid.).

The new **law on political parties** was supposed to allow for an easier registration for new parties in order to revive the political landscape, in which parties besides the IAF did not yet play an important role. The NDC’s subcommittee had suggested lowering the minimum number of founding members to 100 (The Jordan Times, 13 April 2011). The lower house changed the number to 250, and finally the senate intervened and put the number back to the previous 500 (The Jordan Times, 31 May 2012). In combination

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<sup>112</sup> For a general discussion of Arab constitutions cf. Brown (2002).

<sup>113</sup> It almost goes without saying that the king appoints the court’s judges (article 58 of the constitution).

#### 4. EMPIRICAL STUDY I: JORDAN

with the required geographical distribution of members, this made it hard for new parties to be established. Moreover, the licensing of parties should be the task of a committee headed by the Minister of Interior instead of remaining the sole domain of the same ministry (The Jordan Times, 31 May 2012). In a nutshell, this law also failed to be a quantum leap for political life. Moreover, its impact has to be assessed in relation to the electoral law.

The suggestion for a modified **elections law** that the NDC finally proposed to parliament was of very little substance. The main point of criticism of Jordanian electoral regulations has always been the single-non transferable vote system, which results in the population voting for relatives or tribes members. While it is hard to figure out whether the low profile of political parties is the reason or the effect of this elections law, party politics used to be marginal at best. This was announced to be changed through a new logic in the electoral system. The major novelty of the revised electoral law should be a mixed system with two votes instead of one, abolishing the notorious single non-transferable vote and introducing a second vote for political parties. However, this step towards a more egalitarian representation of the population in parliament was thwarted by the details of the suggested law.

While the number of parliamentary seats was raised from 120 to 150, the bulk remained reserved for candidates outside of the list system. The number of mandates that were supposed to be distributed through party lists was as low as seventeen out of 150 seats. This watering down triggered the outrage of the opposition movement so that the king himself intervened and ordered the government to raise the number of list seats. The number that was finally decided upon was not significantly higher: twenty-seven seats, still allotting more than 80% of the total share of mandates to candidates that were ultimately elected because of primordial ties rather than party programs. The reason behind this weak concession was that in the absence of other organized parties, the IAF would most probably win the bulk of the party mandates.<sup>114</sup>

Instead, in the face of this less than superficial reform, the IAF and other parties belonging to the National Front for Reform, such as the Communist Party, decided to boycott the following parliamentary elections, making it clear that they saw no significant

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<sup>114</sup> The number of the party-based mandates suggests that an IAF participation and overwhelming victory was expected. According to a high-ranking IAF functionary, 20-30 seats were the dimension of mandates that the main opposition party was offered in previous manipulated elections in case the IAF would participate. Personal interview, April 2011, Amman.

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changes compared to the pre-Arab uprisings elections (Christophersen 2013: 8). The *Hirak* also called for a boycott. On the other side, some long-standing politicians suddenly discovered their heart for party politics and started their own one-man-show parties in the run-up to the elections. At any rate, established candidates were advantaged, as parliament rejected a proposition by the government to lower the minimum age for candidates from 30 to 25 years in article 70 of the amended constitution, ensuring that the lower house would not become representative of the population (The Jordan Times, 29 September 2011).

The government took great pains at **mobilizing voters** in order to prove to the world that the elections would be a turning point in the history of Jordanian politics – despite the non-participation of the largest political party. First, the time span for registration as a voter was extended several times. On elections day, January 24, 2013, the voting time was extended by one hour to increase the chance for a higher turnout. This measure obviously did not succeed. Instead, the solution was to calculate the turnout as in the previous election, taking into account only the percentage of registered voters rather than the share of the whole electorate.<sup>115</sup> Therefore, official discourse proclaimed a rather high turnout rate of 56.5% in spite of the boycott, whereas it stood at something between 35 and 39% of the population entitled to vote.

An aspect that was supposed to boost popular confidence in the election process was the newly established **Independent Elections Commission** (IEC) which was assigned the role of managing and overseeing the elections.<sup>116</sup> The fact that a number of deputies proposed the IEC's chairman for the post of prime minister only a little time later shows that independence was not the ultimate goal of his position. Moreover, the setup of the institution resembled many Jordanian bodies: it consisted purely of former ministers (Christophersen 2013: 9).

The IEC performed its task in handing over candidates who allegedly tried to buy votes to the authorities, i.e. police and courts (The Jordan Times, 16 January 2013). However,

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<sup>115</sup> The ca. 2,272,182 voters that registered for the elections made up about 70% of all eligible voters, the number of whom is somewhere between 3.25 and 3.7 million. With 1,288,043 actual voters, the turnout rate is 35-39% if one takes into account the total number of eligible voters instead of the registered voters. In 2010, the number of eligible voters had been as high as 4.3 million, but a turnout of 53% was given with 1.26 million actual voters (David 2011). It can still be seen that the absolute numbers of voters were almost identical and there is reason to suspect an artificially inflated number of voters in 2010.

<sup>116</sup> It was somewhat embarrassing that the new prime minister Khasawneh talked about the IEC's being established ensuring that "[t]here will be no more rigged elections in the Kingdom", implicitly admitting that this had been the case before (The Jordan Times, 3 November 2011).

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this neither impressed the candidates nor the voters: at least three arrested candidates were actually elected while still in custody (The Jordan Times, 25 January 2013). In a representative survey commissioned by the International Republican Institute, only 20% of all respondents were convinced that vote buying was not widespread (IRI & MEMRC 2013: 18). A very telling episode was relayed by Marc Lynch on the online platform Twitter, quoting another user: “Favorite moment in yesterday's Jordanian election when a boy, around nine years old, asked if we wanted to buy his vote.”<sup>117</sup> Monitoring observers by the Arab League also complained about the massive presence of security personnel outside the polling stations, reported to number 47,000 (The Jordan Times, 25 January 2013).

Moreover, the vote counting did not proceed in a completely smooth way. The announcement of final results was delayed. In several instances, winners were announced who after a recount of the votes had not won a mandate. This led to riots in many provincial towns, the blocking of roads, burning tires, and attacking polling stations by enraged relatives of the losing candidates. The police tried to disperse the protests using tear gas (Al Hayat, 25 January 2013). The youth movement affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood announced a protest on the day after the elections in Amman, contesting the legitimacy of parliament in the light of the flawed electoral law (The Jordan Times, 25 January 2013).

The lower house of the Jordanian **parliament**, the national assembly, is generally known to be the home of clientelism rather than law-making (Lust 2009). Voters base their choice of candidates on the requisite that they provide services to their constituents, which 94.7% responded in a study on the previous parliament (Identity Center 2010). Beyond that, Yom claims – albeit without giving any references – that “the GID regularly bribes deputies in order to influence their public positions” (Yom 2013: 134). In the protests, it was one demand to strengthen the legislative vis-à-vis the executive. Heeding the royal call to move in this direction deputies organized themselves in factions, which was observed with higher interest after the 2013 elections than before. In 2009, only 34% of citizens who were asked in a poll whether they knew parliamentary blocs existed had answered in the affirmative (Al-Quds Center for Political Studies 2009). The twenty-seven seats that were subject to party contestation were taken by

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<sup>117</sup> Posted online on 24 January 2013 at <https://twitter.com/abuaardvark/status/294404815323271168> rev. 27.03.14.

#### 4. EMPIRICAL STUDY I: JORDAN

twenty-three different micro-parties, with only one party, the Islamic Centrist Party (known as *Wasat*), winning three mandates and three other parties taking two seats each (The Jordan Times, 28 January 2013). This splintering of the apolitical landscape demonstrates strikingly how unimportant the political parties are. Moreover, the relative “victory” of the Islamic Centrist Party, which had won the bulk of its sixteen seats through direct mandates rather than through the party list despite its unpopularity (Abu Rumman & Hanieh 2013: 23), shows that political Islam regardless of its organizational form constitutes an ideological current preferred by many voters. Among the elected MPs, only three women reached parliament outside of the women’s quota of fifteen guaranteed mandates (Christophersen 2013: 10). About three quarters of all deputies were elected to parliament for the first time (Ryan 2013: 3).

The novelty of the 2013 parliament was that it was granted the right to be consulted on the selection of the prime minister, a former prerogative of the king. What appeared as a shift of competence from the executive to the legislative power did not materialize however since a majority of deputies suggested that the prime minister appointed by the king stay in office (see also below in 4.3.5.). The status quo is thus preserved, or, in Sean Yom’s words, “[how] could anyone want power to devolve from the monarchy into the hands of such petty squabblers?” (Yom 2013: 136).

The **Press and Publications law** is another parameter that is regularly adjusted as a survival strategy (Lucas 2003). It was amended in September 2012 to introduce “professionalism” in the online press, having before triggered the resignation of the Minister of State for Media Affairs and Communications (see also below in 4.3.5.). The amended law tightened the grip on online websites that had mushroomed in Jordan and covered local news in a rather independent and outspoken manner. According to the new regulations, online media basically have to abide by the requirements that also govern print media through registering with the Ministry of Information’s Press and Publication Department for a fee of 1,000 JD.<sup>118</sup> The law’s intention was to contain allegations of corruption through prohibiting the publication of “defamation” and imposing a fine (article 38 §D). Moreover, the website owners were to be held accountable for their users’ comments, which they were ordered to moderate and delete if deemed inappropriate, but nevertheless to archive for the authorities’ use. Furthermore, all websites were obliged

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<sup>118</sup> The amount had been lowered from the originally envisaged 10,000 JD (The Jordan Times, 23 August 2012).

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to nominate an editor-in-chief who had been a member of the Jordan Press Association for at least four years (Tiber 2013). Websites that couldn't fulfill these requirements could be blocked (which then happened to 300 out of 400 existing news sites in June 2013; *ibid.*). These stipulations impeded all attempts by local and young citizens to publish independently and drastically restricted freedom of information.

##### **Symbolic mode**

When studying the symbolic mode of structural legitimation, the most important point to look at is the king. While it is obvious that all authoritarian rulers use the guise of democracy rhetoric, the way in which they present their arguments paves the way for citizens accepting actual policy outcomes and is telling not of their real intentions, but of what they want the audience to believe is their real intention.

In Jordan, especially democratization and the particular road to democracy as a gradual reform process were stressed in semi-official op-eds and in the king's speeches (The Jordan Times, 25 January 2013). In King Abdullah II's most eagerly anticipated speech in June 2011 on the combined festive day remembering the "Arab Revolt, Army Day & Coronation Day", he was eager to hint at the difference between a desired process of reform, which would be led by himself, as it had always been the case, and "the risks of chaos and *fitna*" in which particular groups would hijack democratic transformation processes (Abdullah II, 12 June 2011).<sup>119</sup>

The king also had a particular vision as regards the ideal political landscape, which should see the emergence of "two to five political parties representing left, right and centre as quickly as possible" (The Jordan Times, 23 September 2011). Such a setup would not least perfectly match his politics of divide and rule.

The "committeeisation" of politics (Bank 2004: 170), meaning the referral of reform issues to committees under the auspices of the king, was not only used for the purpose of control and co-optation, but also meant a delegitimation of protesters who voiced their demands on the street instead of participating in what was coined "constructive dialogue". In the same vein, officials condemned demonstrations that were held in places where they would "disrupt normal life", as the dominant discourse put it (The Jordan Times, 28 March 2011). Also the sometimes co-opted secretary-general of a small left-

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<sup>119</sup> *Fitna* [Arabic: disorder] refers to deep factions and has the connotation of bloody civil wars in early Islamic history.

#### 4. EMPIRICAL STUDY I: JORDAN

wing party, Abla Abu Olbeh, denounced demonstrations as a means of politics during a public debate on political reform, telling the youth not to take to the streets.<sup>120</sup>

After the parliamentary elections, the king himself did not shy away from selling the low turnout, which was calculated to be higher, as a success in a meeting with some international monitors of the elections. He was quoted as praising it as a sign of “Jordanians’ commitment to expand their participation in political life and the decision-making process” (The Jordan Times, 25 January 2013).

More relevant was the anti-corruption discourse, since it is the single most important issue around which all Jordanians could rally and also the factor that would unite oppositional forces.<sup>121</sup> It was also massively taken up by parliamentary candidates in their campaigns for a lack of more refined programs. But besides being perceived as countering corruption, it seemed of great importance to elites to control and channel allegations of corruption. Not least the king stressed that Jordanians should avoid corruption charges “on the basis of rumours and gossip at the expense of countering it through the judicial system and active monitoring institutions” (Abdullah II 2011), probably hinting at the allegations that had been made against the queen and her family.

##### **Policy mode**

Curtis Ryan describes the **failed co-optation of the IAF** in the following words: “The regime was in full crisis mode, attempting to mollify both traditional bases of support and traditional sources of opposition” (2011a: 388). Government members and even the king began talks with the IAF, offering their loyal opposition a ministerial post for the first time during Abdullah’s reign (ibid.). Obviously, the IAF refused in order to continue claiming that the government is not representative of the Jordanian people – which it still would not have been even with one IAF member among some thirty other ministers. The IAF preferred not to be part of a government it perceived as illegitimate over co-optation and a higher degree of recognition. The failure of co-optation thus put the IAF in a very comfortable and credible position. Still, the Islamists never challenged the king’s legitimacy, and they constantly demand reform of the regime instead of a change

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<sup>120</sup> Public debate held in the Arabic Cultural Center on March 28, 2011 in Amman. The Minister of Culture had promised to take part, but did not show up.

<sup>121</sup> Personal interview with political analyst, Amman, April 2011. Another example is that in a classroom discussion at the University of Jordan, the teacher claimed he would accept any party or individuals in government if they only were able to eradicate corruption (April 2011, Amman).



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of regime.<sup>122</sup> The problem they presented was therefore limited, although a major attempt at widening the regime base through structural co-optation failed. Again in October 2011 the IAF rejected an offer to participate in the Khasawneh government (The Jordan Times, 25 October 2011). After the parliamentary elections, the Islamists repeatedly declined participation in a “national salvation” government, which was little surprising after they had boycotted the elections (The Jordan Times, 7 February 2013). However, it was a recurring phenomenon that the IAF stopped its street protests whenever reform activities were underway only to resume them after the government measures turned out to be useless from the party’s point of view – which they usually were. It thus kept a steady oppositional role and effectively created an equilibrium of stabilized expectations on both sides.

As a classical measure of co-optation, the youth was a target of the committeeization in view of inclusion. The Higher Youth Council, a body created mainly to cooperate with international institutions, held a national conference in April 2011 under the unwieldy title “The translation of the noble royal vision of the role of the youth in reform” (Arabic: *tarjama ar-ru’ia al-malikiya as-samia li-daur al-shabab fi-l-islah*), in Al-Hussein Youth City.<sup>123</sup> Already the title made the top-down approach evident.

One of the main points of structural legitimation in the policy mode was the actual fighting of corruption, which lagged behind the rhetoric. The escape of business tycoon Khalid Shahin who had been jailed for corruption, but disappeared on a “medical trip” to London enraged the Jordanian public in early 2011.<sup>124</sup> Two ministers resigned over having allowed him to leave the country (The Jordan Times, 4 November 2011). The **Anti-Corruption Commission** (ACC) headed by Samih Bino had already been set up in 2006, but by the time of the uprisings seemed to investigate more important cases, following the age-old royal directive that the fighting of corruption should be a “top priority” (The Jordan Times, 8 March 2011). The consequences for those convicted of corruption were not too harsh, after all. A “five-star prison” consisting of five villas had

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<sup>122</sup> Personal interview with high-ranking IAF member, April 2011, Amman.

<sup>123</sup> Petra 02.04.2011: “PM urges youth to use electronic media to safeguard domestic peace”, online: [http://www.petra.gov.jo/Public\\_News/Nws\\_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site\\_id=1&NewsID=27274&CatID=14](http://www.petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=27274&CatID=14) rev. 03.04.2011.

<sup>124</sup> Shahin had donated a large sum to the dubious UN-organization “Intergovernmental Institution for the Use of Micro-Algae Spirulina against Malnutrition”, which appointed him as a goodwill ambassador and provided him with a diplomatic passport (Ammonnews, 11 July 2011). Ironically, his own health problems which he claimed could not be treated in Jordan were obesity-related.

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been built in a pine forest close to Salhoub near Jerash, where Khaled Shahin and senior officials convicted of corruption had been held (The Jordan Times, 10 January 2012). While officials gave a capacity number of 60 prisoners, other reports suggest that “each villa houses two persons” (Al Arabiya, 5 December 2010). However, the prison triggered a popular outcry and was closed after slightly more than one year.

Even though the ACC was in charge of gathering information on corruption cases, the prosecution was in part the task of the State Security Court that operates outside of the civil judicial system. It is by no means certain that the trials are fair. One of the show cases was made against the former mayor of Amman, Omar Maani, for “failure to perform his official duties”, a rather diffuse accusation. Some felt the trial’s end was to present a scapegoat and “opportunities for the state to appear serious without having to actually be serious about it” (The Black Iris, 4 January 2012). In the opposite direction, the eagerness of the director of the Central Bank of Jordan to combat corruption was not welcome at all, and he was forced to resign, despite belonging to the Hashemite family (The Black Iris, 20 September 2011).

The handling of another case involving former and sitting prime minister Ma’rouf al-Bakhit sparked an uproar in parliament, resulting in the resignation of various MPs (The Jordan Times, 30 June 2011). It was al-Jazeera and the Guardian who had brought to light the extent to which ministers were involved in a secret deal to build a casino in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone as a tourist attraction, while gambling is illegal in Jordan.<sup>125</sup> When the investigations became serious, it turned out that the former and current prime minister Ma’rouf al-Bakhit was involved.

In 2012 even the husband of Royal Highness Princess Basma, Walid Kurdi, came under the ACC’s scrutiny. Kurdi had headed the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company, a formerly state-owned enterprise which was privatized in 2006. After being accused of having embezzled some 40 million USD, his assets were frozen and he fled the country (Ammonnews, 30 December 2012).<sup>126</sup> This case is noticeable because of the close familial relation to the king. It might be interpreted as a concession that not even the royal

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<sup>125</sup> Relevant documents are online at <http://transparency.aljazeera.net/en/projects/jordancasinogate/> rev. 14.05.14.

<sup>126</sup> In 2013, he was sentenced in absentia to over 37 years imprisonment with hard labor and a fine of over 200 million JD (The Jordan Times, 5 June 2013). Nevertheless and hardly surprisingly, the United Kingdom did not extradite him (Ammannet, 13 February 2014).

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family is off limits and as a proof for the seriousness of counter-corruption. Still, Kurdi was “only” an in-law.

A politically important show case was made against General Muhammad Dahabi, who had been the GID’s director from 2005 to 2008. He was arrested in February 2012 on charges of embezzling and laundering money and exploiting public office and was denied bail at least 16 times (The Jordan Times, 17 July 2012). In November, he was found guilty and sentenced to 13 years imprisonment with hard labor as well as a 21 million JD fine (Al Arabiya, 11 November 2012). However, this case arose out of political opportunity and seemed like another fig leaf that was supposed to demonstrate that even the (outdated) big fish would not get away with corruption any longer.<sup>127</sup> The underlying, all-pervasive structures were never tackled. In the Shahin case, after some grass had grown over the scandal, the case was even settled out of court in return for him paying back “millions of dinars to the Treasury” (The Jordan Times, 25 January 2013), which then could be justified towards the public as being to everyone’s benefit. By contrast, culprits in another case that was also linked to him were sentenced exactly on the day of the parliamentary elections as a rather symbolic signal for the will to prosecute corruption (ibid.) – probably inspired by the candidates’ slogans, which all centered on this issue.

##### **Responses**

Regarding the manifold strategies that were part of structural legitimation, different target groups can be identified. In general, of course all measures of reform in the legal-formal mode could be sold to external audiences, but this is not the point in this thesis. Some strategies affected all citizens, while others served to appease protesters, the official opposition and reformist elites.

While the sacking of the Rifa’i government generally found the citizens’ approval, the installment of Ma’rouf al-Bakhit, a retired major-general and former national security chief, as prime minister was received as a signal that security instead of reform was the king’s preference (cf. Ryan 2012: 158). Many people remembered the role al-Bakhit had played in the infamous 2007 parliamentary elections and therefore doubted his will to implement reforms.

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<sup>127</sup> Another former GID director, Samih Battikhi, was ousted and then charged with embezzlement in a similar way in 2003 (Bank 2004: 162). However, he could serve his five-year sentence under house arrest (El-Shamayleh 2012).

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As could be shown, the opposition headed by the IAF welcomed all suggestions for reform, but after seeing the process and especially the meager results voiced criticism regarding all outcomes. Through their electoral boycott, the Islamists signaled that the reform package was not even satisfactory for a loyal opposition. The most important political party thus rejected the attempt to restore legitimacy through elections (Yom 2013: 130). Also elites closer to the government were dissatisfied with the new elections law. Three months before his appointment as prime minister, Abdullah Ensour was quoted as criticizing the non-change with the words: “It seems that authorities believe the Jordanian spring is over and that we can return to the way things were before January 2011” (The Jordan Times, 11 July 2012).<sup>128</sup> Not least the low turnout rate at the parliamentary elections shows that the population did not buy the reform either. While it was doubtable from the beginning how far-reaching the actual reforms would be, the watering down of especially the proposed electoral law was a blow to even the skeptics.

Opposition forces from the IAF saw the establishment of the Royal Constitutional Committee as an affirmation of their decision to boycott the NDC, the recommendations of which the opposition did not expect to be implemented<sup>129</sup> – which turned out to be a correct assessment. The IAF was also disappointed by the limited nature of the constitutional changes. Even the head of the government-controlled National Centre for Human Rights complained that the amendments were introduced without including the citizens in the process (The Jordan Times, 3 November 2011). The secrecy surrounding the Royal Constitutional Committee was also criticized by Ahmad Obeidat (The Jordan Times, 1 February 2012). Only slightly more than a third of a representative opinion poll conducted in September 2011 responded they knew about the amendments in the first place (CSS 2011c: 4). Obviously, no effort at conveying their contents to the public was made, but then there was not too much to be conveyed.

The fact that the constitutional court’s members are appointed by the king was criticized by Ahmad Obeidat as not guaranteeing independence (The Jordan Times, 1 February 2012). Furthermore, he complained about the lack of possibilities for citizens to appeal to the court (*ibid.*).

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<sup>128</sup> Of course, Ensour’s appointment is a classical measure of co-opting a personality that is credible as a reformer.

<sup>129</sup> Personal interview with high-ranking IAF member, April 2011, Amman.

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In protest against the new press and publications law, hundreds of Jordanian websites displayed a black page in late August, and even Queen Noor, the wife of the late king Hussein, endorsed the protest in a tweet (Ammonnews, 29 August 2012). Also the Jordan Press Association supported the website owners' campaign (The Jordan Times, 9 October 2012). Even the former minister of state for media affairs and communications complained that journalists employed too much self-censorship in not even daring to cover the full scope of protests (The Jordan Times, 28 December 2011).

The divergence between the symbolic announcement and the legal-formal implementation of reform was vexing to reform activists. First, despite the eased public gatherings law and the legal possibility to protest without official permission, protesters could not voice their demands peacefully, but were not protected from attacks. A youth activist explained that since the reform talk without tangible outcome had been around for roughly 20 years, there was no trust in the elites' intention anymore.<sup>130</sup> When the March 24 Youth called for an open-end sit-in at the *Duwwar ad-Dakhiliya*, the irony was that the protesters mainly echoed the king's own demands. So, differentiating between the three modes, the March 24 Youth actually tried to support and enforce on the output level what the king voiced – but obviously never really intended – in the discourse mode.

On the other side, official excuses for the delay of reforms seem to resonate with some citizens: To give one example, nationalist twitter user PrincessPetra81 claimed that political reform in Jordan had been postponed over “10 years 1.intifada 2.iraqwar 3.two terror attack on jo 4.lebanesewar 5.gazawar 6.global finance crisis 7.jo stock fraud” (<http://twitter.com/PrincessPetra81>, on 5 April 2011). Notably, only two domestic reasons, none of them of political nature, for a domestic political problem were given.

An opinion poll conducted in May 2011 shows that a majority of the population actually followed the argument that demonstrations disrupted normal life; with a much smaller number of citizens considering dialogue to be the only viable way for reform instead of street politics (CSS 2011b). 55% of the representative sample said they opposed demonstrations because they lead to chaos, whereas only 8% brought forward the official argument that dialogue was the right way to tackle these problems. However, the percentage of supporters for this argument was as high as 24% among opinion leaders that were

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<sup>130</sup> Personal interview, Amman, April 2011.

#### 4. EMPIRICAL STUDY I: JORDAN

asked (ibid.). The concept of dialogue is obviously an elitist matter with the sole aim of co-opting new elites. This shows that the concept of dialogue was not really accepted in the public.

Moreover, youth criticized the NDC for only comprising elderly (and male) elites and thus not being representative of the young population. The Minister of State for Media Affairs and Communications resorted to the response that “many members have similar aspirations, ideas and concerns of Jordanian youths” (The Jordan Times, 5 April 2011). To sum it up, the opposition could not be appeased through the reforms and kept on protesting. However, it was less optimistic its demands would be heard. The broader public showed resignation instead of mobilizing. The tried and tested strategies that the ruling elite recycled in the structural domain kept the political landscape stuck in stagnation.

*Table 4.1: Structural Legitimation Strategies in Jordan*

Addressees	Legal mode	Symbolic mode	Policy mode	Success?
<b>All citizens</b>	Parliamentary elections Press law reform	Fighting corruption	Fighting corruption	Yes? <i>Contradictions!</i>
<b>Pro-reform protesters</b>	Public gatherings law Firing prime minister Electoral reform Constitutional reform	Reform rhetoric		No
<b>Formal opposition (IAF)</b>	Electoral reform		Attempted co-optation	No
<b>Reformist elites</b>	Creation of NDC Monitoring elections Political parties law Constitutional court	Reform rhetoric		Partly

##### 4.3.2. Traditional Legitimation

As mentioned before, traditional legitimation in Jordan is on the one hand based on the monarchy and on the other hand on the historical alliance with the tribes, which are extended families based in the country’s southern desert and northern hilly areas.<sup>131</sup> The latter relation had experienced cracks already before the Arab uprisings.

<sup>131</sup> For the role of tribalism in Jordan for legitimacy in general, cf. Al Oudat and Alshboul (2010).

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Although tribal law was abolished in 1976, in some areas traditional settlement of conflicts is still prevalent and even pursued jointly by police and tribal judges, some of whom are officially recognized by the Palace (Watkins 2014: 33; 38). Temporary truces between families in which a relevant crime was committed are even registered with local police departments, and state representatives increasingly take roles that tribal elders used to play (ibid.: 40; 43).<sup>132</sup> Tribalism is encouraged by the state, and accordingly, “the prestige associated with Bedouin identity has encouraged other sectors of the population, including Palestinian Jordanians and Circassians, to embrace tribal customs” (ibid.: 41). However, the focus on business elites under Abdullah II meant for tribal forces that “the door to the king had been closed”.<sup>133</sup>

Tribal conflicts have become more frequent already since 2009.<sup>134</sup> In early 2011, not the king himself, but a person rather close to him became the focal point of dissatisfaction. Some tribal figures (36 to be precise, only one of whom had been heard of before<sup>135</sup>) wrote a letter to the king complaining about the queen’s family.<sup>136</sup> In a hardly disguised anti-Palestinian tone, allegations of corruption were made, particularly pertaining to the expropriation of tribal lands to the benefit of her family members, who are of Palestinian origin. The second accusation referred to having illegally given Jordanian citizenship to some 80,000 Palestinians; both allegations were unusually harshly repudiated by the court (Petra, 10 February 2011). The letter could be read as the fear of the traditional regime base to be disadvantaged.

##### **Legal mode**

The “king’s advantage” means on a very basic level that a king is harder to challenge than a president who occasionally has to stand in elections, rigged as they may be. Traditional legitimation is enshrined in the principle of dynastic succession in the constitution and the definition of the state as Hashemite (articles 1 and 28). The king’s immunity is guaranteed in article 29 of the constitution. His sanctity is legally prescribed in the constitution, as publicly insulting the king or “undermining his majesty’s dignity” is a

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<sup>132</sup> Nevertheless, Watkins estimates roughly one half of all crimes in tribal areas are resolved through customary law (ibid.: 45).

<sup>133</sup> Interview with political analyst, April 2011, Amman.

<sup>134</sup> Personal interview with political analyst, April 2011, Amman.

<sup>135</sup> Personal interview with political analyst, April 2011, Amman.

<sup>136</sup> In secret, she was even compared to other Arab first ladies notorious for their lavish lifestyle (personal interview with political analyst, March 2011, Amman). This is in line with the “region-wide trend of ‘first ladies’ under ever closer public scrutiny” which Ryan (2011b: 573) noted.

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criminal offense that is prohibited by the Penal Code (article 195). Violations are prosecuted by the State Security Court, with sentences ranging from one to three years (Human Rights Watch 2012a). During the uprisings, these articles were frequently evoked to indict outspoken *Hirak* activists who ridiculed the king or even burnt his portraits (The Daily Star, 12 January 2012). Surpassing these spontaneous acts, Ahmad al-Oweidi al-‘Abbadi, a former MP who had already been jailed before, predicted the establishment of a republic in a talk show on a private internet-based TV channel. The State Security Court had him arrested in February 2012 and charged him with “subverting the system of government”, which is penalized under article 149 of the penal code (Human Rights Watch 2012b).

Paradoxically, the king also made use of his prerogative to grant royal pardon to the convicted youth who had burnt his portrait (Yom 2014: 235). Through this means they even owed their freedom to him in spite of the offenses and he had another possibility to reinforce his image as a tolerant and clement ruler.

The electoral law that benefits tribal areas has already been mentioned. Another measure of allocation was the municipalities’ reform. After the number of municipalities had been reduced from 328 to 93 in 2001, a new law gave areas with a population of over 5,000 inhabitants the right to establish a municipality (The Jordan Times, 13 October 2011), and in 2011 the cabinet decided to establish 99 new municipalities for the allocation of central resources.<sup>137</sup> This led “smaller and less influential tribes” which had not been included in the plan to protest for the establishment of their own municipalities through blocking roads and burning tires (Clark 2012: 367; 373). The next day already, the establishment of 123 new municipalities was announced in order to stop the protests (The Jordan Times, 14 October 2011).

##### **Symbolic mode**

As dynastic succession is one of the central points of traditional legitimation, the young crown prince Hussein is already very present in the Jordanian public, with his portrait hanging in all public offices next to his father’s and grandfather’s. The seemingly premature grooming of the future king Hussein II embodies the inevitability of monarchic rule. The outlook on further stability thus strengthens his father’s rule as well.

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<sup>137</sup> These changes had rhetorically even been sold by members of the Senate as “decentralization” measures (The Jordan Times, 9 September 2011).



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At the beginning of his rule, Abdullah had tried to emulate his father's practices to benefit from the latter's popularity, paying surprise visits to poor villages and paternalistically ordering the authorities on the spot to provide services or allocate money. After the uprisings started, he reactivated his uncle, Prince Hassan, for meetings with elder tribesmen (Yom 2014: 235). This is an ironic development, as the former crown prince had been regarded as too intellectual and detached from the people, but obviously, in comparison to the current king, he seems to have the advantages of age.

As has been mentioned before, the king's noble inheritance makes him the uncontested leader in a society shaped by diversity, and he is therefore seen as superior to all citizens. Many acknowledge him as a ruler standing above the different tribes which wouldn't accept a peer as a leader on the one hand and above different ethnic groups (Palestinians and Transjordanians) on the other hand. Abdullah II himself mentioned this in his speech in June 2011, saying it was his "responsibility and duty [...] to stand at an equal distance from all" (Abdullah II 2011).

In an effort to prove the tribes' fear of being disadvantaged unfounded, the king toured the entire country during the spring of 2011. This was part of a massive campaign to have the formal pledge of allegiance (*wila'*) to his rule from the different tribes and cities renewed and at the same time provided an opportunity to allocate funds to the various regions.

##### **Policy mode**

In a partial reversal of previous policies, some privileges for tribes were reinstated. Most tangibly, the king made use of an allocation tool called *makrama*, which can roughly be translated as a royal favor, which was mainly directed towards the military, veterans, or their family members, and tribes. E.g. on the king's 49<sup>th</sup> birthday, the army announced a *makrama* to establish the so-called "Royal University for Medical Sciences" which is supposed to be affiliated with the army (The Jordan Times, 1 February 2011). Moreover, a "Military Credit Fund" under another *makrama* should favor members of the security apparatus (ibid.). These measures were also a response to grievances the veterans had voiced already in 2010 (David 2010). The *makrama* is distinct from ordinary measures of allocation as it has the connotation of a gift granted by a traditional leader.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> This framing is more common e.g. in Bahrain as a supposedly more traditional feature of politics.

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##### Responses

During the March 24 sit-in, one random but telling observation was that a radio station in Amman transmitted a tribal song praising the king instead of playing the usual pop songs to contrast the youth protest with the regime base's demonstrative support.

Regarding the surprise visits to villages and favors, one interview partner hinted at the general problem that there should not be the need to hand out aid packages, and some 20 years ago such a measure had simply not been necessary.<sup>139</sup>

This strengthening of the regime base through traditional rituals seemed to be quite successful. The only exception would be the protests that accompanied the king's tour in Tafileh. The ICG's assessment was that the youth's demands all revolved around allocation measures and were a classical example of tribal rent-seeking intending to get a larger piece of the cake and thus proved the functioning of this classical co-optation measure (ICG 2012: 11). Probably this interpretation is too simple, and the continued protests of tribe members are a reason for worry to the king. Tribal discontent frequently led to a spiral of protest and repression, "cyclic contentions in which arrests of young protesters touch off more demonstrations and [...] more police clampdowns" (Yom 2013: 135).

The use of the *makrama* had ambivalent effects. Yom cites a young *Hirak* activist complaining they did not want *makrama*, but instead "political rights as a citizen" (2014: 243). University students suffered from the *makrama* policy that lowers the quality of academic education and leads to tribal campus violence. A recent study found that in the four years between 2010 and 2013, almost 4,000 students were involved in campus violence, leading to seven deaths (The Jordan Times, 16 February 2014). This makes campus violence more lethal than politically motivated demonstrations.

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<sup>139</sup> Personal communication with social scientist, Amman, March 2011.

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Table 4.2: Traditional Legitimation Strategies in Jordan

Addressees	Legal mode	Symbolic mode	Policy mode	Success?
All citizens	King's constitutional role	Dynasticism		Yes
Tribal regime base		<i>wila'</i> tour	<i>makrama</i> Municipality re-form	Yes
Tribal protesters	Royal pardon		<i>makrama</i>	No?

### 4.3.3. Identity-related Legitimation

Given Jordan's complex societal structure which comprises many ethnical groups, as outlined above, the question of identity is a delicate matter. For much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with manifold changes in Jordan's territorial characteristics, the national identity was deliberately kept "fuzzy" out of security concerns (Frisch 2002: 100). The national charter of 1991 "defines the nation based more on a 'civic' definition of being loyal to the monarchy" (Lucas 2008: 291). Besides, religion plays an important role for the citizens' identity.

#### 4.3.3.1 Nationalism

In the nationalist subtype of identity-related politics, the strategy employed during the relevant time span seems to be a classical *divide et impera* strategy geared towards deepening the divide between citizens of Transjordanian and Palestinian origins.

##### Legal mode

The newly introduced constitutional amendments stipulate that high officials in various positions may not hold any **citizenship** beside the Jordanian one. This regulation came into force retroactively, which means that sitting members of parliament and ministers were no longer allowed to hold dual citizenship. Politicians were forced to either revoke their citizenship of another state (such as e.g. the USA, Canada or Syria) or resign from their post (see e.g. The Jordan Times, 13 October 2011). This measure on the one hand resonated with a general growing suspicion of foreigners and "foreign agents". On the other hand, it posed "significant challenges for political inclusion for some of the most

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educated and well-trained Jordanians” (Tobin 2012: 97), not least those with a Palestinian background, who tend to have a double citizenship more often than Transjordanians.

##### **Symbolic mode**

Rather than referring to his religiously relevant lineage, until today King Abdullah II tries to invoke the nation-building aspect in statements such as “the legitimacy of the Hashemite dynasty stems from their historical legacy and their achievements” (The Jordan Times, 2 July 2012). There were many official campaigns intended to forge a nationalist sentiment in the 2000 years, most prominently Jordan First (*al-Urdunn awwalan*). Although Jordan First was not even designed by Jordanians and thus not considered a Jordanian campaign, it proved to be rather long-lasting in public spaces (Schwedler 2012: 262ff.).<sup>140</sup> Other large campaigns included the National Agenda and “We are all Jordan”. However, they not only failed in bringing about a common identity (Tobin 2012: 105), the elites willingly used the ambiguity of many citizens’ self-perceptions and contending identities for creating mistrust among the different groups.

A youth activist explained the lack of popular support for the protests by the Transjordanians’ fear that any changes towards democracy would lead to Palestinians ruling the country.<sup>141</sup> In order to counter this fear, Palestinian Jordanians have always exerted some sort of political self-restraint, choosing rather not to protest. In Tobin’s words, “Palestinians would not protest unless the ethnic Jordanians were already protesting” (2012: 98). The lack of consensus about who would actually benefit from political changes was subsequently exploited by the government.<sup>142</sup>

The sectarian card was obviously played by regime thugs who physically and verbally attacked the protestors of the Jordanian youth movement during their sit-in on March 25, calling all of them “Palestinians” – which was meant as an insult. It was obvious that many, if not most of the protesters had an East Jordanian background and all displayed patriotic behavior (Ryan 2011b: 574). Already in earlier protests, Schwedler had noticed that “efforts of the protest organizers to frame the demonstrations as pro-Jordanian ultimately produced a powerful and spontaneous framing contest that challenged the government and its agencies to match the patriotism of the demonstrators’ slogans” (2005: 156). Beyond using the label of “Palestinian”, the prime minister simul-

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<sup>140</sup> Personal interview with political analyst, Amman, March 2011.

<sup>141</sup> Personal interview with youth activist, Amman, April 2011.

<sup>142</sup> Personal interview with youth activist, Amman, April 2011.

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taneously referred to the protesters as Islamists and even Salafis (The Jordan Times, 27 March 2011), thus provoking latent resentments among the broader population against both pro-reform activists and Palestinians at the same time and blaming the Muslim Brotherhood for inciting violence (The Black Iris, 29 March 2011).

The other side, consisting of self-proclaimed “loyalists” to the king, was instrumentalized to induce a wave of nationalism which was supposed to raise doubts about the pro-reform demonstrators’ loyalty to the nation. The name under which the loyalists rallied was “the call of the homeland” (Arabic: *nida al-watan*), as if Jordan had to be saved from democracy activists. The area of nationalist identity-building was thus characterized by a strategy of division and exclusive mobilization.

##### **Policy mode**

A probably unexpected move that was intended to appease the Islamist movement was the rapprochement with Hamas in late 2011 and 2012. The king received the organization’s leader Khaled Mash’al for the first time after having expelled the leadership in 1999; the visit had been brokered by Qatar (Al-Jazeera, 30 January 2012). Prime Minister Khasawneh called the earlier expulsion a “constitutional and political error”, but excluded any political activities of the organization in Jordan (Al Arabiya, 30 January 2012). This remained the only noticeable event, as Mash’al went back to Qatar.

##### **Responses**

Regarding the foundation of national identity, the official discourse did not make everybody happy. A teacher complained in a public debate that he has to teach that what keeps the Jordanian mosaic together is the Hashemite family.<sup>143</sup>

The new stress on national identity resonated somewhat with many citizens, as already between March and April 2011 a marked rise in the number of national flags that were displayed in public, on cars and in shops could be noticed. It sometimes even seemed to become a competition regarding who was carrying the biggest flag. More critical voices felt somewhat insulted that the question of loyalty was mixed with the call for political reforms. Random conversations with people I met in the weeks after the March 24 protest showed that some of the regime discourse was believed. A secular-minded Palestinian Jordanian was convinced that the Muslim Brotherhood had organized all of the

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<sup>143</sup> Remark at a public debate, Amman, 28 March 2011.

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demonstrations and feared that Islamists would hijack any political changes.<sup>144</sup> In contrast, an apolitical Transjordanian, likewise with a high educational level, was unsettled by the regime discourse and remarked that all reform activists were Palestinians, while another one even claimed that the March 24 youth consisted of “Salafis and jihadists” who wanted to “make trouble, destroy the country, the intelligence and the police”.<sup>145</sup> Even though these individual observations certainly do not claim representativeness, they still illustrate that the employment of the nationalist strategy seemed intimidating to ordinary citizens so they would continue to refrain from protesting instead of becoming politicized and mobilized.

While the IAF was pleased with the normalization of relations with the Hamas, its leaders were anxious not to meet Khaled Mash'al in order to maintain their identity as a national Jordanian rather than a Palestinian movement (The Jordan Times, 1 February 2012). Moreover, there was some suspicion that the visit was designed to sow friction between the *Hirak* and the IAF through eliciting the former's fear of a Palestinian-Islamist predominance (ibid.). Through remaining separate, the two Islamist movements tried to maintain their chances for potential future election successes, as the boycott had not been decided upon yet.

Regarding the ambivalence of the identity question, Ryan concludes that “[t]he regime does indeed talk at length [...] about national unity, but divide and rule strategies remain part of the state's tactics and strategies, especially when it is challenged” (2011b: 569). However, the multiple dimensions in which Jordanians of Palestinian origin were excluded, presented as disloyal and put under general suspicion in order to intimidate them and to appease some Transjordanians also included a more evil discourse than in many years before.

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<sup>144</sup> Personal communication, March 2011, Amman.

<sup>145</sup> Personal communications, April 2011, Amman.

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Table 4.3: Identity-Related Legitimation Strategies in Jordan – Nationalism

Addressees	Legal mode	Symbolic mode	Policy mode	Success?
All citizens		Nationalist rhetoric		Yes
Transjordanian nationalists	Only Jordanian citizenship for officials	Defaming protesters as “Palestinians”		Yes (but sidelining Palestinians)
Pro-reform protesters		Accusation of dis-loyalty		Yes (but negative)
IAF			Rapprochement with Hamas	No

##### 4.3.3.2 Religion

The identity-related legitimation strategies that involve religion are by far less precarious than the question of national identity in Jordan. The sectarian composition is characterized by the dichotomy of an overwhelming Sunni majority and a Christian minority of about 6% of the population, cutting across ethnic cleavages (CIA World Factbook 2014a). As in almost all Arab states, the constitution stipulates that Islam is the religion of the state (article 2). For matters of personal status law, there are Sharia courts and equivalents for other religious communities (Abu Rumman & Hanieh 2013: 31f.). Moreover, a Ministry of *Awqaf* and Islamic Affairs oversees mosques and religious education. Even the armed forces have their own section for issuing *fatwas* and previous grand muftis were recruited from this office (ibid.: 66). While the Muslim Brotherhood is the most important societal organization in the realm of religion, state-sponsored Islam tries to impose a moderate perspective.

Besides, quietist Salafis are tolerated despite their radical, but apolitical ideology, and sometimes even encouraged by the government in order to counter the Muslim Brotherhood (Abu Rumman & Hanieh 2013: 20). In contrast, those Salafis who also employ radical, i.e. violent, means and are commonly referred to as jihadist Salafis are prosecuted.<sup>146</sup>

In the realm of identity-related legitimation with a focus on religion, there were hardly any changes observed in the **legal mode**. The reopening of a legal case seemed to aim at

<sup>146</sup> Cf. the study by Abu Rumman and Hanieh on the jihadist Salafis in Jordan (2009) and on the Salafi movement in general by Wiktorowicz (2001). Their movement is characterized by informal ties and by a tribal, lower-class base in comparison to the Muslim Brotherhood, which has a more middle-class base (Abu Rumman & Hanieh 2013: 403).

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appeasing radical Islamists. In 2011, a ridiculous lawsuit in absentia was allowed to be staged against the Dane Kurt Westergaard and others who were blamed for the 2005 cartoon crisis, which had led to major riots in various Arab countries. The file was revived after many years, charging the accused with “defaming prophets, publishing cartoons insulting and slandering Muslims and inciting sectarianism and racism” (The Jordan Times, 18 April 2011; see also The Copenhagen Post, 16 May 2011).

##### **Symbolic mode**

The king has an elevated and undisputed religious position as a biological descendant of the prophet Muhammad. This argument of his noble ancestry gives the king a natural advantage not only over tribal, but also Islamic actors, who in other countries claim the monopoly on religious authority. Of all government institutions, the welcome page of the Ministry of Interior’s website had been displaying a picture of the praying king along with a qur’anic verse<sup>147</sup> for more than three years at the time of writing.<sup>148</sup> In general, Abdullah II did not invoke his religious legitimacy more often than necessary (Schlumberger 2010: 241). The Arab uprisings have not changed this.

One of the foremost concerns of the palace is to portray and promote Islam as a moderate religion. The former crown prince Hassan is most prominent in his interfaith activities on a global scale.<sup>149</sup> The emphasis on moderate Islam was in line with portraying Salafis as a danger, who, in early 2011, suddenly were allowed to appear in public after having kept a low profile for years, demanding the release of jihadist prisoners in various sit-ins. When regime thugs attacked a peaceful demonstration by Salafis on April 15 in the northern town of Zarqa under the eyes of gendarmerie forces, scores of protesters and security personnel were left injured. But this time, even the Minister of Interior took the blame of traditional Salafis, who usually adopt a quietist, apolitical stance, instead accusing jihadists of “terrifying people”, well aware of the fact that many people do not differentiate between the various strands (The Jordan Times, 26 April 2011). On their part, Salafis did not take the chance to complain about the role of the security apparatus in this violent incident. Instead, representatives of “mainstream” Salafism visited injured members of the gendarmerie in hospital, thus de facto accepting the official dis-

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<sup>147</sup> It is a part of *sura* 2:126 (*al-baqara*) saying “My Lord, make this a land secure, and provide its people with fruits” (transl. A.J. Arberry).

<sup>148</sup> The website was accessed on 3 April 2011 and 17 May 2014.

<sup>149</sup> His political role has been taken by Prince Ghazi, who has more Sufist leanings (Abu Rumman & Hanieh 2013: 73).



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course (The Jordan Times, 18 April 2011). So the regime managed to send a message to the Salafis that was at the same time violent and conciliatory, but they chose to remain non-oppositional.

Another problem emerged in preparation of the sit-in on 15 July 2011, when the hawkish former IAF deputy Muhammad Abu Faris, a professor of Shari'a, issued a *fatwa* saying that "whoever dies in a protest [...] is considered a martyr ... even non-Muslims" (The Jordan Times, 14 July 2011). He was subsequently countered on state television by the grand mufti, the prime minister and a Salafi cleric with the argument of sowing *fitna* (The Jordan Times, 15 July 2011). This incident seemed so grave that the representatives of state Islam, the government and quietist Salafism united in denouncing the *fatwa*.

##### **Policy mode**

Regarding policies on religion, there were hardly any noticeable changes. Most importantly, the state funds the pervasive building of new mosques. This is one of the strategies that is supposed to respond to higher religiosity, but is preferred over uncontrolled private organizations that could harbor extremist thought. Moreover, the state pays the income of religious personnel, and here an interesting development can be detected. The number of imams on the state's payroll jumped by 22% from 2011 to 2012 (Jordan Statistical Yearbook 2012: 202). This is an indicator for an increase of allocation that goes hand in hand with greater control.

##### **Responses**

The Jordanian group that had campaigned against the Muhammad cartoons was split in its reactions to the trial, as their leader hailed it, while a former member complained about the "political reasons" that were behind the reopening of the case (The Jerusalem Post, 8 May 2011).

As has already been described, the instrumentalization of the jihadist Salafis worked well in unsettling the population. In contrast, the traditional Salafis used the chance to deepen their unlikely alliance with the government.

Obviously, in spite of the *fatwa* and counter-*fatwa* regarding martyrs' deaths in protests, no martyrs were made on July 15.

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*Table 4.4: Identity-Related Legitimation Strategies in Jordan – Religion*

Addressees	Legal mode	Symbolic mode	Policy mode	Success?
All citizens				
Religious population		Promotion of moderate Islam	More state imams	?
Salafis	Westergaard case	Appeasement of traditional Salafis Countering jihadists		No?

##### 4.3.4. Material legitimation

The general patterns of material legitimation in Jordan heavily depend upon the strategies' addressees. The upper classes profit from business opportunities, and especially the military has profited from structural adjustment measures (Baylouny 2008). The dominant strategy towards the regime base and the broader population is allocation through employment in the public sector and subsidies on consumer goods (Peters & Moore 2009: 280). The measures that were taken in response to the uprisings were dominated by collectivist-inspired allocation, as economic grievances were the initial demands that brought people out on the streets.<sup>150</sup> The protests showed that the previously dominant pattern of material legitimation based on neo-liberal modernization seemingly proved a failure, as the outcomes of these economic policies had alienated parts of the former regime base.<sup>151</sup> This is especially true for Transjordanians employed in the public sector who were laid off in the wake of privatization of formerly state-owned enterprises, which e.g. affected workers in the southern potash and phosphate industries (Yom 2014: 245).

##### Legal mode

In the legal-formal domain of material legitimation, a restructuring of the social system was attempted to adapt the social contract to economic realities and to turn away from the rentierist allocation at least in one field. However, the government first tried every-

<sup>150</sup> In February 2011, a survey conducted by the Center for Strategic Studies (CSS) showed that 85% of the population considered economic issues to be the biggest single problem for Jordan (33% rising prices, 25% unemployment, 19% poverty, 8% the general economic situation), in contrast to only 1% who thought political reform to be the most pressing issue (CSS 2011a).

<sup>151</sup> Two thirds of employees in the newly created Qualified Industrial Zones are non-Jordanians (Abugattas-Majluf 2012: 238).

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thing else (described below under policy) before being forced to resort to structural changes. The subsidies on fuel derivatives that posed an ever heavier burden on the state treasury were supposed to be replaced by a cash transfer system that would benefit truly needy citizens (The Jordan Times, 3 September 2012). Rich Jordanians or even foreigners who own various cars and consume the most profit more from subsidies on fuel than do poor citizens or even refugees without a car of their own. The subsidies can therefore be seen as a way of also appeasing the privileged classes. This inefficient practice has always been criticized by international financial institutions (IMF 2012b). In the face of a growing budget deficit, in the summer of 2012 a standby agreement with the IMF provided the Jordanian government with a 2 billion USD credit (The Jordan Times, 26 July 2012). The lifting of subsidies should be paralleled by the first round of distributing cash payments to needy families as a compensation for the rising prices in November 2012. However, as described before, the significant hikes of fuel and cooking gas prices led to massive street riots. The amount of money handed out to lower and middle income households (under 800 JD per month) was merely 70 JD per year (The Jordan Times, 4 March 2013).

The bizarre way of dealing with the fuel riots was the government's decision to set up a pricing committee consisting of ministry officials and representatives of the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company that determines at every month's beginning ad hoc what the fuel prices for the respective month will be, taking into consideration world market prices (The Jordan Times, 19 November 2012).<sup>152</sup> The reintroduction of government control and setting monthly fixed prices is a very statist and even paternalistic approach and completely contradicts the logic that led to the systemic change envisaged above.

##### **Symbolic mode**

The discourse of modernization and social responsibility that had dominated before faded into the background. In November 2010, the king had lauded Jordan's macroeconomic indicators in his speech from the throne and predicted that "improving the performance of the economy will continue to top our priorities". For more than two years that followed, the discourse on political reform completely took over.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Such a procedure had already been in place until 2011 (IMF 2012b: 14).

<sup>153</sup> The texts of all speeches are online at [http://kingabdullah.jo/index.php/en\\_US/speeches/listing/cid/1.html](http://kingabdullah.jo/index.php/en_US/speeches/listing/cid/1.html) rev. 19.05.14. The neglect of neo-liberal ideology lasted until the opening of the newly elected parliament in the beginning of 2013 and was subsequently reversed again.

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In order to boost domestic income, 2011 saw a new campaign aiming at domestic tourism. The launching of the “Jordan is Beautiful” campaign was supposed to compensate for cancellations from tourist groups who booked regional packages including Syria and/or Egypt – countries that were increasingly becoming too unsafe to travel. The Arabic name of the tourism campaign, “*al-Urdunn ahla*”, literally meaning Jordan is *more* beautiful, neatly mirrors the attitude that in every aspect, Jordan is a more convenient place to be than any other Arab country.

##### **Policy mode**

One of the king’s first measures during the uprisings, rotating the prime minister Samir al-Rifa’i out of office, can either be seen as a populist strategy of directly responding to popular pressure or as the first symbolic move away from co-opting the neo-liberal business elite. The mass allocation measures that followed came at the price of sacrificing some of the previously co-opted individuals – or at least of a lower profile role for them. However, as there were no larger structural changes to the set-up of the elite, a successful allocation policy would still result in an overall “plus” for material co-optation.

The government reacted to the protests predominantly through employing the region-wide standard strategy of raising the public servants’ salaries and at first keeping **subsidies** in spite of a tight state budget and rising external debts. In 2011, 1.4 billion JD were spent on subsidizing wheat, gas, fuel, electricity and water (The Jordan Times, 9 September 2011).<sup>154</sup> The 2011 budget was changed after the demonstrations had started; according to the revised draft, overall expenditures were projected to increase by ca. 10% in contrast to 2010 to 6.36 billion JD (The Jordan Times, 7 March 2011). Effectively, the budget reached 6.8 billion JD by the end of the year and over 7 billion JD in 2012 (IMF 2012b: 35).

A grave weight on the budget was the purchase of diesel for generating energy. This problem of securing cheap energy resulted from recurrent attacks on the gas pipeline on the Sinai peninsula which transports gas from Egypt to the Levant, including both Israel and Jordan. The share of Egyptian gas that was used for Jordanian electricity generation dropped from 80% in 2009 to merely 18% in 2012, raising the cost of subsidies for electricity to between 800 million and 1 billion JD (The Jordan Times, 19 November 2012

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<sup>154</sup> The IMF numbers are slightly lower, indicating 567 million JD for fuel and 217 million JD for food subsidies (IMF 2012b: 35).

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and 21 March 2013). In September 2012, the government had already tried to enact a fuel price rise, but upon protests led by both *Hirak* and Muslim Brotherhood, the king reversed the decision (The New York Times, 3 September 2012). Consequently, relations with Iraq were strengthened, which materialized in plans for a new pipeline and a minor, but symbolic grant of crude oil from Iraq (The Jordan Times, 28 November 2012).

Of course, resources for mass spending came from external sources. Both the USA and the Gulf states played a crucial role here with their vital interest in preserving stability in Jordan. Jordanian elites unscrupulously play on this concern by “portray[ing] Jordan as constantly on the brink of collapse” (Yom 2013: 130), which financially speaking is true. This cost-intensive strategy was supposed to be further sustained by Jordan’s envisaged accession to the Gulf Cooperation Council, which would then be transformed into the Arab monarchy’s club against revolution. However, after a 5 billion USD fund had been set up for Jordan and Morocco in late 2011, no further steps towards institutional cooperation were made (The Jordan Times, 21 December 2011).<sup>155</sup>

Meanwhile, the different professional associations, which have always had a high degree of organization in Jordan, began staging strikes and sit-ins one after the other.<sup>156</sup> Their demands were substantial increases in **salaries** and other gratifications. Professionals working in the public sector demanded the right to organize in unions and to be paid as much as their counterparts in the private sector. The resentment of Transjordanians working predominantly in the public sector versus Palestinians that are driven into the private sector was tangible. However, the public sector restructuring that was supposed to “improve” the salaries of some 200,000 employees came with the reduction of overpaid employees at so-called “independent public institutions”. The fact that of the 8,000 employees affected by the original restructuring plan only 6,000 were talked of after a month shows their successful lobbying – the elites obviously decided to continue the co-optation of some of their base (The Jordan Times, 31 May 2011; 29 June 2011). Nevertheless, the higher public sector salaries and benefits charged the 2012 budget with 60 million JD (The Jordan Times, 16 May 2012).

Mostly, the demands of protesters were partially met and thus protests could be ended quite quickly. Other random groups who stopped their work during the same time were

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<sup>155</sup> For more details on the accession plans, see Ryan (2014).

<sup>156</sup> E.g., the engineers’ association organizes about 100,000 members (The Jordan Times, 1 July 2012).

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pharmacists and shop-owners. Most importantly, in early 2011 also teachers went on strike and demanded the right to found an association along with a salary raise of 150% plus more guaranteed university places for their children (The Jordan Times, 20 March 2011). In the summer of 2011, an additional *makrama* benefiting the children of teachers was introduced, covering their university tuition fees and stipends (The Jordan Times, 7 July 2011). Upon adoption by parliament and a royal decree, a teachers association law was passed in autumn (The Jordan Times, 14 October 2011). Under the public sector salary restructuring for 2012, the teachers' salaries were supposed to increase by 70%. In early 2012, teachers again protested for ten days until they obtained a total 100% pay raise (Petra, 21 February 2012). Later in November 2012, the new Jordan Teachers Association staged an open strike to support the fuel riots (The Jordan Times, 15 November 2012). In all, the expenditure for wages and salaries had risen from 835 million JD in 2010 to 950 million JD in 2011 and 1.177 billion JD in 2012 (IMF 2010: 23; IMF 2012b: 35; IMF 2014b: 43).

In order to escape the state's control structures in the seven official unions, workers increasingly started to organize in independent trade unions, counting six by June 2011 and even countered the corporatist structures through creating their own umbrella organization, the "General Federation of Independent Unions" (Adely 2012: 37).

As mentioned before, the support of the **armed forces** is crucial for any authoritarian leadership. The Jordanian Armed Forces provide services for their members even beyond active service, e.g. through university stipends. Army and other security personnel benefit from the Military Credit Fund that offers loans for housing etc. (The Jordan Times, 1 February 2011). Also the military veterans, who had been unsatisfied for quite some time, were appeased through allocative means, especially those organized in the "Economic and Social Association of Retired Servicemen and Veterans". Their pensions were raised, charging the budget with another 30 million JD in 2012 (The Jordan Times, 16 May 2012).

In the absence of other noteworthy natural resources, **tourism** is an important sector of the economy with a comparatively high employment rate.<sup>157</sup> It is one of the primary

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<sup>157</sup> The sector has among other things profited from foreign direct investments (Abugattas-Majluf 2012: 242).

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sources of external income for the Hashemite Kingdom.<sup>158</sup> Jordan hosts the traces of ancient civilizations, various biblical sites, and remains of different Islamic dynasties. Many of those tourism sites are located in the tribal regions that used to be regime strongholds. The most prominent of them is to be found in Petra, since 2007 also ranked among the “New Seven Wonders of the World”, attracting more than half a million foreign tourists per year. The rent character of tourism rents as accruing from external sources can be seen wherever the tickets for foreigners multiply the prices that Jordanian citizens have to pay – which is the case on many sites. In Petra, the difference is especially striking, as ticket prices for day visitors were raised from 40 JD to as high as 90 JD within 9 months,<sup>159</sup> in order to capitalize on well-off tourists. In contrast, the entrance fee for Jordanians is only 1 JD.<sup>160</sup> As only in 2011 a bylaw was drafted to allocate a share of entry fees to tourism sites for maintenance, up to that point all revenues had been directed to the state treasury (The Jordan Times, 23 September 2011).<sup>161</sup> Furthermore, the Ministry of Tourism in despair tried to engage Jordanian citizens in promoting Jordan as a safe destination, including bloggers and other social media (The Jordan Times, 22 March 2011).

#### Responses

Although many protests began to run out of steam after a few months, it is hard to tell whether the reason was the success of allocation. The developments of late 2012 show that buying time through buying off protesters is the least sustainable strategy one could possibly imagine. In Bank’s words, the “crisis management only scratches the surface of the structural socio-economic problems of mass unemployment, underdevelopment and lack of prospects for the youth” (Bank 2012: 33). The fuel riots are the starkest indicator for the fact that the plans to rebuild the social system were neither sufficiently communicated nor accepted. According to a World Bank-led survey, not only is 80% of the population’s poorest quintile not covered by any social security measures, but half

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<sup>158</sup> Thomas Richter and Christian Steiner categorize income accruing from tourism as a particular sort of rent because there is a comparative advantage and an attraction that does not correspond to any sort of investment (Richter & Steiner 2008: 943).

<sup>159</sup> The official explanation was “maintenance costs”, cf. <http://petrapark.com/visitor-center> rev. 03.04.2011.

<sup>160</sup> Even from the tickets for foreigners, only 2 JD are spent on site conservation, online: <http://petranationaltrust.org/UI/ShowContent.aspx?ContentId=196> rev. 02.04.2014.

<sup>161</sup> The cities in which the sites are located did not receive any of the income, although being responsible for hosting the tourists (Clark 2012: 362).

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of the total population is not even aware of existing measures (The Jordan Times, 28 November 2012).

On the positive side, the military veterans' protests were evaluated as having "quieted down remarkably" following their pension increase (Yom 2014: 243). As regards the strikes, the success can only be assessed some time after the increased salaries turned out to be sufficient. However, the heightened inflation that results from higher wages destroys the gains, making it a zero-sum game for employed consumers, while it poses a real problem to all those that do not profit from formal sector employment. This one-sided policy therefore increases societal inequality. Also, "many of the labor demands are linked to wider grievances about neoliberal economic policies, corruption and government accountability", which cannot be resolved and will continue to emerge as reasons for protest (Adely 2012: 37).

Jordanian citizens were largely unaware of the domestic tourism campaign. Despite the efforts at drawing tourists, the number of visitors to Jordan dropped dramatically. While in 2010 over 8 million visitors had come to Jordan, in 2011 the number fell under 7 million to reach only 6.3 million in 2012, and the figures for the first months of 2013 show a further decline.<sup>162</sup> So this dangerous trend seems to be rather stable. Especially the numbers of day tourists who booked regional packages fell most drastically by about 25% from 2011 to 2012. Yet, revenues from tourism only fell "by 16.5 per cent in the first 11 months of 2011" (The Jordan Times, 9 January 2012), as tourists who stay in the country for a longer time spend more money anyway, and also probably due to affluent tourists from the Gulf countries. This development made the tourism board decrease its budget (The Jordan Times, 23 December 2011). At any rate, it was the first time in many years that the tourism sector shrank, laying off staff in hotels near Petra (ibid.) and in tourist restaurants.<sup>163</sup> But already again in 2012, the official figures show an overall rise in employees.

However, this recovery was only confined to one sector and could not keep up with the demographic development, as the annual growth rate of 2.2% leads to an absolute population growth of about 100,000 persons per year. This does not even take into account the number of Syrian refugees, which at the end of the time span under consideration

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<sup>162</sup> Official numbers by the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities are available online: <http://www.tourism.jo/en/Default.aspx?tabid=132> rev. 02.04.14.

<sup>163</sup> Cf. the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities' Table 1.1 "Number of Employees in different Tourism Activities, 2005-2013", online: <http://www.tourism.jo/en/Default.aspx?tabid=132> rev. 02.04.2014.



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stood at 150,000 registered persons.<sup>164</sup> The number of newly created jobs even decreased between 2010 and 2012 from 62,812 to 48,069.<sup>165</sup> The logic behind the allocation was to protect vested rights rather than creating sustainable solutions. As has been described before, also keeping the subsidies is a very unsustainable way of addressing the social hardship of an increasing number of citizens.

*Table 4.5: Material Legitimation Strategies in Jordan*

Addressees	Legal mode	Symbolic mode	Policy mode	Success?
All citizens	Pricing committee for fuel and gas	Shift away from modernization discourse	Keeping subsidies	No (not long-lasting)
Public sector employees			Salary raises	Yes
Tribal regime base		Boosting tourism		No
Lower classes	Attempted transformation of subsidy system			No

##### 4.3.5. Personal Legitimation

The king's personal legitimacy suffered during the Arab uprisings, first when his wife and her family came under attack from tribal forces. The dissatisfaction with his style of rule became tangible in the rumors surrounding possible alternatives to his rule. His half-brother Prince Hamza and his uncle, the former long-time crown prince Hassan were discussed as potential successors who would allow for a "new" beginning.<sup>166</sup> However, the idea of exchanging unpopular rulers remained low-profile.

**Legal mode:** The king's personal legitimacy is strengthened on the legal base of the constitution which vests all powers in him. As the relevant regulations apply to all Hashemite kings instead of being suit-tailored, they have already been dealt with in the chapter on traditional legitimation (4.3.2.).

<sup>164</sup> Half a year after this time, the number had already tripled and surpassed half a million refugees. All data are provided by the UNHCR, online at <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=107> rev. 19.05.14.

<sup>165</sup> All numbers are taken from the Jordanian Department of Statistics' website, online: [http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos\\_home\\_e/main/](http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_e/main/) rev. 02.05.14.

<sup>166</sup> To some, Prince Hamza may also have the advantage over Crown Prince Hussein of not having a mother of Palestinian origin (Pelham 2011).

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##### Symbolic mode

On the symbolic level, the ruler's personal credibility is central for his legitimation. Yom suggests that in 2012 the king tried to lower his personal profile to preclude possible criticism, in a way that even "the palace did not publicly celebrate his birthday for fear that official portraits of him would be defaced" (Yom 2013: 128). Another observance is that the queen took a less prominent role from 2011 on and largely concentrated on charitable work in the field of education, partly reacting to the public dismay at her lifestyle.

The armed forces are an important addressee to cater to. The king paid frequent visits to security forces and would even bring then underage crown prince Hussein along, both wearing military fatigues (The Jordan Times, 17 March 2011).

In various speeches, the king claimed to lead the reform process, as has partially been discussed under structural legitimation (4.3.1). What helped to promote his image of a reformist king was a paper written by former foreign minister and deputy prime minister Marwan Muasher for the Carnegie Endowment in May 2011. It suggested the king was working hard on reform, while his efforts were constantly undermined by "ossified" elites (Muasher 2011: 4). The addressee of such a discourse is largely an audience abroad without deeper knowledge of power relations within Jordanian politics. However, this kind of assessment from presumed "independent" policy advisors can also be used to domestically support the prevailing rhetoric.<sup>167</sup>

The king's self-proclaimed role did not seem to be taken seriously. In an attempt to bolster his argument, Abdullah began to publish reform papers in late 2012 outlining his vision for politics in Jordan, beginning with a document entitled "Our Journey to Forge Our Path Towards Democracy".<sup>168</sup> In the second paper published shortly before the parliamentary elections, he sketched out what a "transition" to a parliamentary system could look like, not least preparing the citizens for a slower pace.

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<sup>167</sup> A similar strategy backfired in March 2013, when The Atlantic published an article based on a journalist's off-the-record conversations with the king and also the queen, in which Abdullah II bluntly spoke out against basically all important societal actors (The Atlantic, 18 March 2013). In a half-hearted attempt to calm down the Jordanian public, which of course also had access to the piece, the Royal Court released a declaration simply denying the king's statements. Abdullah also gave an interview to Associated Press (Ammonnews, 20 March 2013) to offer alternative publicity, but it was too late (The Black Iris, 20 March 2013).

<sup>168</sup> All discussion papers, four between December 2012 and June 2013, can be accessed on the king's website, online: [http://kingabdullah.jo/index.php/en\\_US/pages/view/id/244.html](http://kingabdullah.jo/index.php/en_US/pages/view/id/244.html) rev. 18.05.14.

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##### **Policy mode**

Regarding the policy mode of personal legitimation, elite rotation and maintenance depending on loyalty are the most important element of personal legitimation. This is a common pattern of Middle Eastern politics as part of neo-patrimonial rule, especially in the linchpin monarchies without family rule.

Bringing together the protesters' demands with the issue of personal legitimacy, one core pattern of political rule in Jordan came under threat. In theory, the protesters' call for an elected government has a potentially larger effect than just curbing the king's influence on everyday politics through appointing officials. It would interfere with his position as a neo-patrimonial "ultimate arbiter", as Waterbury (1970) described the position of the Moroccan king, to whom all elites are accountable. The loyalty of members of an elected government could principally be to their own constituencies. The institutions available for the shuffling of elites would be confined to the Senate and the Royal Court. Also, the most important and powerful tool to secure his rule would be taken out of the king's hands. Although it is unlikely that an oppositional or disloyal person would ever become prime minister, an alternative center of power of its own right (or worse: the people's right) might emerge from such a constellation.

Elite rotation has long been the central feature of power politics and has also been "inherited" by King Abdullah II from his father King Hussein (Bank 2004: 163). This neo-patrimonial mechanism resulted in an average term of a minister's or even prime minister's service of only 11 months and decreased further during the months of the uprising, even confusing experts: while Curtis Ryan identified this development as "political instability" in one sentence, he described the reshuffling of elites as a strategy for stability in the next (2014: 145).

If one wants to make sense of the speeding up of rotation, the appointment policy shows a pattern of alternation between recycling security-oriented, hardline personalities and introducing moderate or reformist new faces in order to boost credibility with reform activists and the external audience. After Samir ar-Rifa'i's sacking in February 2011, Marouf al-Bakhit's term lasted for 8 months. The security apparatus was indirectly strengthened by shuffling a former head of the General Intelligence Directorate into the office of prime minister. After him, Awn al-Khasawneh, a former judge at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, was praised by a royal advisor as having "a clean slate", which is a telling criterion in itself (The Guardian, 17 October 2011). He lasted

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for 7 months, with the unusual exit of resigning himself while abroad. This decision came as a result of the hastened way in which the king tried to push through the parliamentary elections in Khasawneh's absence sidelining him (Al Arabiya, 1 May 2012). The controversial electoral law and the short time frame for the electoral commission to be set up fell short of any meaningful reform (Abu Rumman 2012). After Khasawneh's resignation, another "hardline" government with a familiar face was formed under prime minister Fayez Tarawneh. His cabinet did not even include a Minister of Youth anymore (The Jordan Times, 3 May 2012). The intention from the beginning was that Tarawneh should administer the affairs of the state until the elections, which resulted in a five months' term. The fact that his government received the lowest approval rates ever during Abdullah II's regency was probably another reason for his short term (CSS 2013: 11f.). Somewhat surprisingly, in October, the rather reformist Abdullah Ensour was appointed, who had heavily criticized the electoral law before. The way in which he was astoundingly also "elected" by the 2013 parliament has already been described. And again, it was Tarawneh who led the talks with members of parliament in his new (old) position as Royal Court Chief.

As could be shown, the actual implementation of the envisaged empowerment of parliament ensured the continuation of politics as usual. The prime minister was selected from the members of parliament elected in January 2013, which the IAF had boycotted. Thus, the personalities the prime minister was to be chosen from assembled the usual suspects. Moreover, the procedure that the chief of the Royal Court – who was Fayez al-Tarawneh at the time – conducted the talks with MPs to find out about their preferences shows that the King was not willing to let the matter be taken out of his hands (The Jordan Times, 11 February 2013). The fact that many parliamentary blocs endorsed the incumbent prime minister as their "own" candidate demonstrated the weakness not only of their actual, but even of their perceived role (The Jordan Times, 28 February 2013). Eventually the "new" prime minister who was chosen after consultation was the old prime minister, Abdullah Ensour.

Personal co-optation on the level of sub-elites was primarily addressed towards influential opinion-makers whose expertise is in demand in order to keep public discourses under control. This channeling of (minor) dissent contributes to the picture of the government as a pluralistic entity in which good will is present and failure can be attributed to reform-unwilling segments. One example of these co-optation measures was the ap-

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pointment of the former editor-in-chief of a large daily newspaper, Taher Odwan, to the position of minister of state for media affairs and communications and government spokesperson in the February reshuffle.

While the establishment of the NDC has already been discussed under the category of structural co-optation, it also implied personal co-optation. The reformist bloc of fifteen actually temporarily left the NDC after the violent attack on the demonstration on March 25, 2011, in order to express their anger about regime-tolerated violence and the treatment of pro-reform activists. They only came back to join the committee after a face-to-face meeting with the king during which he promised them to personally guarantee the outcome of the recommendations and offered them the right to propose constitutional amendments.<sup>169</sup> As shown before, these promises were not kept.<sup>170</sup>

##### Responses

Regarding the success of the personal strategies of legitimation, a youth activist complained that because the discourse about reforms had been going on since 1993 without tangible achievements, all trust in these promises had been lost.<sup>171</sup> A lack of commitment was evident in the gap between discourse and action throughout all legal changes that were enacted. Even if sometimes the king “stepped in” and had regulations changed towards a less conservative direction, these measures of “labor division” fell short of impressing activists.

Nevertheless, the king still enjoyed personal trust in the sense that everybody is aware of his crucial role for achieving policy outcomes. One of the reasons that the Islamists gave for boycotting the NDC was that it had not been set up by the king himself, which already gave a clue that recommendations would not be implemented.<sup>172</sup> This argumentation is perfectly sensible in the Jordanian context, but always comes at the expense of low trust in formal institutions.

In commenting the king’s reform speech in June 2011, blogger Naseem al-Tarawnah complained about the fact that the complete socialization process makes all citizens focus on the king instead of acting themselves. According to him, it did not matter wheth-

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<sup>169</sup> Personal interview with member of the NDC, April 2011, Amman.

<sup>170</sup> Ironically enough, another attempt at appeasing one of the most vocal journalists from the reformist bloc might have been making his brother the new spokesperson of the government and state minister for media affairs and communication in the July reshuffle (The Jordan Times, 4 July 2011).

<sup>171</sup> Personal interview, 10 April 2011, Amman.

<sup>172</sup> Personal interview with high-ranking IAF member, April 2011, Amman.

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er the king's professed desire for reform was genuine, because the citizens were deliberately kept in a state of immaturity (The Black Iris, 15 June 2011).

Regarding personal co-optation, one example given above of the minister of state for media affairs and communications, Taher Odwan, was not successful, as he himself resigned from his office after only four months (The Jordan Times, 22 June 2011). He protested among other things against the restrictive amendments to the press law, thereby causing a major crisis for elites and necessitating a government reshuffle (not affecting the prime minister). 47% of an opinion leaders sample indicated that the lacking implementation of demanded reforms was the main reason for Jordan going into the wrong direction (CSS 2013: 9).

*Table 4.6: Personal Legitimation Strategies in Jordan*

Addressees	Legal mode	Symbolic mode	Policy mode	Success?
All citizens			Alternating rotation	Yes?
Pro-reform protesters		King leading re-form		No?
Reformist elites	NDC promises			No

##### 4.3.6. Preliminary Conclusion: Success or Failure of Legitimation Strategies?

Summing up the strategies of legitimation, especially those that targeted political protesters and the opposition failed, most notably as regards the IAF. In contrast, the measures that aimed at strengthening the regime base seemed to be more serious and were pursued in even more different types of legitimation. They were mostly successful in the expensive allocation strategies, although these could hardly be upheld even for two years only. In some instances, it was hard to detect any response at all.

One noticeable feature is that quite some strategies, especially in the identity-related sphere, had a divide-and-rule rather than a legitimating effect. An entrenchment that profits the regime base seemed to be the overall goal, risking the alienating of the bulk of the population, notably citizens of Palestinian origin. While a vocal minority includ-

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ing the *Hirak* still protests, the majority is silenced, and patronage ties continue to work. In early 2013, the share of citizens who believed Jordan generally to be moving in the wrong direction was constantly growing (CSS 2013: 8).

Tobin furthermore critically remarks that “[h]olding elections, sacking and reappointing government representatives, and increasing economic purchasing power all heighten consumerism and provide political distraction” (2012: 104). But those who would not be distracted and persisted in their demands also faced a different strategy of political rule: repression.

### 4.4. REPRESSION IN JORDAN<sup>173</sup>

As mentioned before, Jordan is known to be one of the less repressive countries in the Arab world. Put extremely, “[t]he consensus was that the Jordanian police will kick you but will not kill you” (Tobin 2012: 106). Still, rule is maintained with the help of an extensive security apparatus. Curtis Ryan describes the GID as “one of the region’s most sophisticated intelligence services” (2014: 148). During the Arab uprisings, the level of repression remained lower than elsewhere, also due to the less threatening challenge. Still, various repression measures targeted protesters and other groups. Consequently, the Political Terror Scale’s ratings remained at 3 (Gibney et al. 2014).

#### 4.4.1. Constraining Repression

The large Friday protest on 18 February 2011 was the first that was attacked by thugs (Bustani 2011). During protests, security forces exerted more violence than necessary to disperse demonstrators, but mostly the dirty work was done by civilian thugs. On March 25, the gendarmerie forces known as the *darak* helped the loyalist thugs to violently disperse the youth movement’s demonstration, using water cannons, sticks and batons (The Jordan Times, 27 March 2011). 62 civilians and 58 security forces were said to have suffered injuries (ibid.). One activist who was hospitalized as a result of severe beating reported that the “boxing fest” stopped because the police officers were afraid he could die under their hands. Nevertheless, he announced he would not follow Am-

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<sup>173</sup> Some parts of this section are based on a paper co-written with Mirjam Edel, “To Repress or Not to Repress – Varieties of Regime Survival Strategies in the Arab Spring”, which was presented at the Annual Conference of the German Political Science Association (DVPW) – Section for Comparative Politics, Marburg, 29-31 March 2012. The modified version which was published in *Terrorism and Political Violence* (Josua & Edel 2014) does not include the case study on Jordan anymore.

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nesty International's advice to file suit (Ammonnews, 28 March 2011). Apart from protesters, also journalists covering the demonstration were beaten both by thugs and *darak* forces, who demolished their equipment (Committee to Protect Journalists 2011). The local Al-Jazeera bureau received anonymous death threats after having covered the protests in Amman (ibid.).

It is important to note that the repression on March 25 was also regarded as legitimate by some. One Transjordanian I accidentally met explained to me: "you know, I was with the ones throwing stones".<sup>174</sup> He ridiculed the perception of the *darak* as aggressive by referring to security personnel who guarded a sports event and denied that the *darak* had attacked the pro-reform protesters at all.

Another incident in which the government used loyal forces to push its agenda ensued from a visit by the prime minister to the Palestinian refugee camp of al-Baqaa, after which he visited the powerful tribe that owns the land, telling members of the tribe to go to the camp and warn its inhabitants against demonstrating.<sup>175</sup>

On April 15, 2011, the Salafis' demonstration in Zarqa was attacked by highly untypical unarmed gendarmerie forces and thugs. In the clashes, some 80 security officials claimed to be injured – although injuries by teargas can hardly be attributed to Salafis (The Jordan Times, 17 April 2011). It was quite obvious that this clash was staged in order to convince the broader population of the threat the Salafis pose and to gain sympathy for security personnel. The picture that was widely circulated in news reports afterwards showed a bearded, wild looking man raising a sword in fury.<sup>176</sup> This image of the impersonation of evil was truly scary and the decision to publish such an unrepresentative picture was certainly deliberate. Abu Rumman and Hanieh also talked of "employing the 'Jihadis' as a scarecrow to deter people away from demonstrations and from popular demands for reform" (2013: 436).

Pro-reform rallies continued to be attacked by suspected "loyalist" thugs. Again in July 2011, gendarmerie forces attacked a demonstration and especially targeted journalists – who had been handed orange vests in order to single them out (Center for Defending the Freedom of Journalists 2011). Moreover, in June the office of the press agency which

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<sup>174</sup> Personal communication, Amman, April 2011.

<sup>175</sup> Personal interview with member of the tribe, Amman, April 2011.

<sup>176</sup> It was circulated by Associated Press and can still be seen online under <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/islamists-attack-jordan-police-with-swords/story-e6frf7jo-1226040059766> rev. 19.05.14.



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had published the story of a harmless attack on the king's motorcade in the south was destroyed (The Jordan Times, 16 June 2011). The bureau chief, Randa Habib, was threatened in an anonymous phone call. During a sit-in organized by a MP, protesters chanted "the people want the downfall of Randa Habib" (The Jordan Times, 30 June 2011).

Intimidation of journalists and Islamists turned out to be a dominant strategy. The IAF's general secretary, Hamzah Mansour, was threatened early on and put under police "protection" (The Jordan Times, 14 March 2011). The party headquarters were broken into and a few days later attacked by a man wearing a fake explosive belt (The Jordan Times, 5 April 2011).

A case of online repression was a reaction to the local news site Ammon News that had published the letter of the 36 tribal figures criticizing the state. When upon the GID's request the website owner refused to delete the letter, subsequently the website was hacked and deleted, and both personal and work-related e-mail accounts were blocked (Freedom House 2012: 11). In February 2012 within a couple of hours two young activists were stabbed after having posted online articles critical of former Crown Prince Hassan (The Jordan Times, 25 February 2012). One of the two was a female student who was stabbed in the stomach by a masked man who told her not to publish on politics anymore, while the Public Security Department issued a defamatory statement saying that she had a "deteriorating relationship to a young man" (Ammonnews, 21 February 2012).

After voicing critical comments on the electoral law in a political talk show on the private satellite channel JoSat in July 2012, participants as well as the anchor were accused of "incitement against the regime" and "undermining the King's dignity" (The Jordan Times, 7 February 2013). Moreover, the TV channel was blocked (Human Rights Watch 2012c).<sup>177</sup>

In the wake of the fuel riots, security forces employed more violence than before during protests, where they once had protesters attacked by dogs, and also in jail, where torture increased (Human Rights Watch 2012d).

In a more subtle vein, the locations that had been used as protest sites in the absence of a suitable public space were closed off in order to prevent rallies. First, the *Duwwar ad-*

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<sup>177</sup> Interestingly, the news anchor, Roula Hroub, was elected to parliament in 2013 through the list "Stronger Jordan". Her case was subsequently dropped (The Jordan Times, 20 February 2013).

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*Dakhiliyah* and later the 4<sup>th</sup> circle in West Amman close to the Prime Ministry was fenced off after an open-ended sit-in by orphans and planted with roses (Hiari 2012). The roundabouts in politically sensitive areas were thus made physically impossible to access and to use as a space for protest.

To sum it up, target groups of restraining repression were all rank-and-file reform activists and Islamists, and to some extent even their leaders. Salafis were hit hardest, however, in this case the repression was probably regarded as legitimate by other groups in the population. Moreover, even politically inactive Palestinians were a rather indiscriminate target of repression. At protests and through restrictive legislation, journalists were intimidated and prevented from reporting freely.

### 4.4.2. Incapacitating Repression

As mentioned before, the number of persons who were killed during protests was low, with one on March 25 and two casualties during the fuel riots (The Jordan Times, 27 March 2011). Instead arrestments dominated the incapacitating subtype of repression.

The flipside of a higher degree of freedom of expression was discussed during the first public debate on the role of security services in public life, when one of the speakers only partly sarcastically remarked that surveillance had now become easier because agents only had to watch the live video broadcast in order to decide whom to jail subsequently.<sup>178</sup> Activists were arrested for mainly limited time spans. In the street battle on 25 March 2011, 87 of the pro-reform protesters were arrested for resisting police officers and sent to the Criminal Court, rather than any of the thugs, let alone riot police, who had assaulted them (Ammonnews, 8 April 2011). The leader of the day laborer movement, Muhammad Sunayd, was arrested four times between the summers of 2010 and 2012. Also in the provinces, high-ranking activists of the labor movement were detained (Adely 2012: 36).

After the violent clashes in April 2011, 230 Salafis were charged with i.a. “terrorism” and unlawful gathering, about fifty of them were jailed, and one hundred kept in custody, some in solitary confinement over months, and charged before the State Security Court (Wilcke 2011). According to their lawyer, two leaders of the Salafi jihadists were

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<sup>178</sup> Remark by lawyer Sufian Obeidat at the 4<sup>th</sup> HashtagDebate, April 2011, Amman. While the atmosphere was rather tense in general, the present observing agents were civil enough to present themselves to the organizers before the start of the event.

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moved to solitary confinement because they had refused to clean the prison toilets, which of course the authorities denied (Ammonnews, 24 August 2011).

The handpicked Royal Constitutional Committee had proposed an amendment to the constitution, according to which the State Security Court's jurisdiction over civilians was supposed to be restricted. This proposition was voted down by parliament (The Jordan Times, 23 September 2011). As already mentioned, in February 2012 a proponent of republicanism was arrested for "subverting the system of government" under article 149 of the penal code (HRW 2012b). Between March and October 2012, almost seventy activists were accused of this offense and tried in the State Security Court (Ammannet, 23 September 2013).

Another wave of arrests followed after the fuel riots, targeting over 300 protesters within two weeks. According to a report, also peaceful protesters were indicted, and 107 of them were charged before the State Security Court (Human Rights Watch 2012d).

*Table 4.7: Repression in Jordan*

		Targeted persons/groups		
		Opposition leaders	Rank-and-file activists	Politically inactive population
<b>Form of repression</b>	Constraining	Islamists, jihadi Salafis	Journalists, pro-reform activists, Islamists, Salafis	Palestinians, Salafis
	Incapacitating	Jihadi Salafis	Pro-reform activists, Salafis	----

So although Jordan's death toll in the Arab uprisings was very low, constraining repression has not been the government's only answer. Instead, the arrestment of protesters was conducted in a rather broad manner, although it targeted more rank-and-file activists than opposition leaders. Again, incapacitating repression targeted most strongly the Salafis, more precisely the jihadist Salafis, with the authorities detaining at times 10 or even 20 percent of all known members of the movement.

The repression of reform activists sometimes came in an uneasy mixture with co-optation, so the red lines that had been stretched since the beginning of the uprisings

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were tightened again. But as the mix of charges and dropped charges, imprisonment and pardons showed, authoritarian regimes trying to reassert themselves do not at all times send unambiguously clear messages about where the red lines are. The wish to present an image that is both strong and tolerant hardly works in crises, as the tolerance is exploited by protesters, triggering an even fiercer response. Therefore, the repression measures became more intensive and harsher over time.

##### **4.5 CONCLUSION: SUCCESS AND FAILURE OF STRATEGIES OF POLITICAL RULE IN JORDAN**

In a concluding assessment, Sean Yom states that “the political scene of early 2013 looks much like it did before the Arab Spring” (Yom 2013: 127). While this is certainly true on the surface if one looks at the polity, beneath the surface there is much more potential for unrest simmering. First and foremost owing to dramatic developments in the region on the one hand and hesitant and divided protest groups on the other hand, meaningful reforms could be avoided so far. The relative regional advantage of stability is, in a somewhat circular dynamic, reinforced by reference to this very fact. As Tobin notes, “the regime has also encouraged comparisons to neighboring countries” (Tobin 2012: 105). As Jordan was a latecomer in the Arab uprisings, it could observe the developments in neighboring countries and learn that by March 24, the regional momentum had already been lost. Ryan laconically concludes: “Jordan had managed to survive, as usual, without a revolution of its own” (2014: 151).

Taking a closer look at the processes of political reform, in some respects all initiatives were outmaneuvered by different political institutions. Propositions by the National Dialogue Committee were watered down in the Royal Constitutional Committee, the lower house of parliament rejected many propositions by the Royal Constitutional Committee, and the upper house vetoed decisions by the lower house. It is not even worth mentioning that the king regularly blames all prime ministers for unpopular decisions which he “directed” them to implement in the first place. What seems like a complex institutional imbroglio at first sight can hardly veil the impression that any announced reforms are procrastinated for as long as possible through a system of labor division that always puts the blame on others.

It is striking that many negative strategies were employed, such as bringing up the nationalist question of loyalty, the demonization of protesters and even of Palestinians in

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general, who form the majority of the population. Mistrust was sown, while the provision of services was re-concentrated on the former regime base. State employees and tribes benefited the most from various measures and mostly also rewarded these policies with loyalty.

Regarding the sequencing of the strategies, as piecemeal concessions were rejected, repression was stepped up. While an increase in repression could be detected over time, it was not always clear whether the rejection of legitimation strategies was a reason for or a consequence of repression. The ambiguities that sometimes arose out of the symbolic and policy modes could be resolved through a look at measures in the legal mode that were clearly designed to delay change for as long as possible and to sooner or later restrict the citizens' room for maneuver.

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Table 4.8: Summary of All Measures in Jordan

	Legal mode	Symbolic mode	Policy mode	Success?
<b>All citizens</b>	Parliamentary elections Press law reform King's constitutional role Pricing committee for fuel and gas	Fighting corruption Dynasticism Nationalist rhetoric Shift away from modernization discourse	Alternating rotation Fighting corruption Keeping subsidies	Yes? <i>Contradictions!</i>
<b>Pro-reform protesters</b>	Public gatherings law Firing prime minister Electoral reform Constitutional reform	Reform rhetoric King leading reform Accusation of disloyalty	Alternating rotation	No <b>+ Repression</b>
<b>Formal opposition (IAF)</b>	Electoral reform		Attempted co-optation Rapprochement with Hamas	No <b>+ Repression</b>
<b>Reformist elites</b>	NDC Monitoring elections Political parties law Constitutional court	Reform rhetoric	Alternating rotation	Partly
<b>Tribal elites</b>		<i>wila'</i> tour	<i>makrama</i> Municipality reform	Yes
<b>Tribal protesters</b>	Royal pardon		<i>makrama</i>	No? <b>+ Repression</b>
<b>Transjordanian nationalists</b>	Only Jordanian citizenship for officials	Defaming protesters as "Palestinians"		Yes (but sidelining Palestinians)
<b>Religious population</b>		Promotion of moderate Islam	More state imams	?
<b>Salafis</b>	Westergaard case	Appeasement of traditional Salafis Countering jihadists		No? <b>+ Repression</b>
<b>Public sector employees</b>			Salary raises	Yes
<b>Lower classes</b>	Attempted transformation of subsidy system			No

### 5. EMPIRICAL STUDY II: ALGERIA

#### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria gained independence from French colonialism in 1962 after a bloody war of independence that had lasted for eight years. Algeria had been the only colony that was considered to be French soil, so the struggle for self-determination was fought in an extraordinarily fierce manner. The war of independence became the founding myth that legitimized the rule of the *Front National de Libération* (FLN) through its army generals during the following decades.<sup>179</sup> Regarding the standing of the armed forces, Mortimer conveys the telling quote that “in most countries the state has its army, but in Algeria the army has its state” (1993: 37). However, Steven Cook refrains from calling the regime a military dictatorship, rather speaking of “military-dominated states” in which officers do not openly rule, but only prove to be “the locus of power” in times of crisis (2007: 15). The center of power, also known as *le pouvoir*, is hard to locate, but said to consist of an unknown number of army generals, resembling a “deep state”<sup>180</sup> (Joffé 2013: 209).

Until today, the liberation struggle serves as the “register of legitimation” (Dris-Aït Hamadouche & Dris 2012). In the terminology of the former sources of legitimacy, this equals ideological legitimacy. One of the FLN's goals to strengthen its standing was to repel the French culture from public and cultural life. In the economic domain, a strategy of socialist-inspired development was pursued (Elsenhans 1977). This included an “agrarian revolution” and steering the economy with the help of state-owned enterprises. The statist logic still prevails despite more recent and rather hesitant strategies of liberalization.<sup>181</sup> The fact that five year plans for production exist savors of a planned economy. As Algeria is one of the world's largest oil producers, also the oil sector was nationalized in the 1970s. Algeria qualifies as a rentier state *par excellence* with all its

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<sup>179</sup> On the consequences of colonial rule for creating a national identity in Algeria cf. Hill (2009). For general, concise introductions to Algeria's social and political history see i.a. Ruf (1997), Entelis (1986).

<sup>180</sup> This concept has frequently been used to describe the military's involvement in politics in Turkey, but served to analyze the power structure in Egypt after the fall of Mubarak. In the meantime, also scholars such as Werenfels have come to use it for Algeria (2014: 5).

<sup>181</sup> On the political economy of privatization cf. Werenfels (2002). Also Dillman analyzes the beginning of privatization, showing how also private business actors engaged in rent-seeking (2000). Likewise, Schlumberger (2004a) demonstrates the continued rentierist character of the economy. On the hesitant reforms in the agrarian sector cf. Aghrout (2004). The behavior of the state class is analyzed by Ouaisa (2009).

## 5. EMPIRICAL STUDY II: ALGERIA

advantages for the political elite and disadvantages for sustainable development.<sup>182</sup> The oil sector is the most important industry, with hydrocarbon products making up almost 40% of the GDP, 60% of budget revenues and more than 97% of all exports.<sup>183</sup> The second source of legitimacy therefore was material allocation, for as can be expected from rentier state theory, “the regime’s legitimacy [...] from the beginning was based on distribution” (Werenfels 2007: 33). Allocation of rents was among other things managed through employment in public enterprises, which were completely unproductive, even amassing large sums of debt (Kichou 2009: 68f.). In contrast, the oil sector’s share in employment is only 2%, to the IMF’s chagrin (Algérie1.com, 14 March 2013). Most employment is in the informal sector, which is said to comprise 50% or even 60% of the economy and to cover about 22% of all employment, with higher numbers in the commercial sector (Dris-Aït Hamadouche & Dris 2012).<sup>184</sup> Despite these impressive and unambiguous figures, the production of oil has declined by more than 20% in the past seven years, according to the estimation of a former minister of finance, Abdelatif Benachenhrou (El Watan, 13 February 2013). This development casts doubts on the economic strength in the middle and long term. Current officials deny this figure and indicate a decline of 5-6% only (ibid.). The impressive numbers regarding external revenues could be sustained through high prices on the world market. Nevertheless, domestic oil consumption is projected to double between 2008 and 2018 (Mekideche 2009: 162). On the negative side, the productivity of manufacturing has gone down by half between 1989 and 2007, while at the same time expenses for infrastructure tripled to benefit primarily foreign workers from Asia (Kichou 2009: 81f.). The sale of gas has become more prominent over the past years, with Algeria possessing the world’s tenth largest gas reserves (CIA World Factbook 2014b). Nevertheless, Algeria’s position is strategically not ideal, as the “Euro crisis” states of Italy and Spain account for 72% of all sales.<sup>185</sup>

The Arab socialist approach was also tangible in the political sphere in the form of the ruling single party, into which the FLN evolved after the war, still comprising former

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<sup>182</sup> See Beblawi and Luciani (1987) for the general theory and Henry (2005) for the effects of rentierism in Algeria.

<sup>183</sup> In all, the exports in 2011 earned 73 billion USD, of which only about 2 billion were not oil-related (Dris-Aït Hamadouche & Dris 2012). On the hydrocarbon sector in Algeria cf. Aïssaoui (2001).

<sup>184</sup> Even the IMF gives the rate of 46% for 2010 (IMF 2013: 42).

<sup>185</sup> According to a newspaper report, Italy receives 44% of all gas exports, followed by Spain (28%), France (12%) and Turkey (8%) (Liberté, 27 February 2013).



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independence fighters. On the societal level, mass organizations with close connections to the FLN offered a controlled institutional structure for citizens' activities. Most prominent among them was the corporatist union for workers in the public sector, UGTA (*Union générale des travailleurs algériens*).

The population has grown steadily, comprising 37 million inhabitants in 2012, as opposed to 30 million inhabitants in 2000 (El Watan, 18 April 2013). The percentage of citizens under the age of 15 was around 27% (ibid.). The Algerian state pursued its effort to form a national identity based through a strategy of Arabization as opposed to French culture. However, this development came at the expense of the Berber/Amazigh population who make up about 20-30 percent of Algerian citizens and are predominantly present in the coastal region east of Algiers (Kabylia). Consequently, state policies were met with resistance in different forms. Kabylians protested in the so-called Berber Spring of 1980 and later, notably in 1988. 2001 saw another Kabyle uprising known as the Black Spring, which was harshly repressed by security forces.<sup>186</sup> Finally, the Berber language Tamazight was recognized as a "national" (as opposed to official) language in a constitutional change in 2002 (article 3 *bis* of the Constitution).

The distinct national identity furthermore comprises Islam as the civilizational foundation of the state in contrast to French values. Zoubir (2010: 182ff.) claims the coexistence of secular and religion-based legitimation undermined the elites' credibility, playing into the hands of more radical Islamists. The results of this policy were evident towards the end of the 1980s, when the newly founded *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS) emerged as the winner of free elections first on the municipal level in 1990 and then in the first round of the national parliamentary elections in late 1991.<sup>187</sup> Many scholars claim that the protests that preceded the stalled transition of 1988-1992 equaled "Algeria's own aborted 'Arab Spring'" (see e.g. Sadiki 2012). Indeed, the riots in October 1988 had started in a similar way as did the Arab uprisings through mass protests caused by price hikes following the economic crisis in the late 1980s which had forced austerity measures on the country. Notably, youth protests which were at first violently

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<sup>186</sup> For a brief presentation of the Kabylia identity and movement cf. Willis (2008).

<sup>187</sup> A monumental study on the Islamist movement in Algeria and especially the FIS' rise was written by Willis (1996). Volpi (2003) studies the FIS as well as the other Islamist groups in a perspective of Islamic political thought.

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repressed paved the way for a liberalization of political and social life.<sup>188</sup> While the population happily made use of its new power, the consequences of free elections were unacceptable to both the FLN and the *pouvoir*.

The military staged a coup in January 1992 and stopped what could have been a real democratization process. The ban on the FIS led to a bloody civil war as different Islamist jihadist groups formed and radicalized themselves, not least fostered by the government security services that sought to delegitimize their contenders and legitimize their own brutal responses.<sup>189</sup> The GIA (*Groupe Islamique Armée*) and GSPC (*Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat*) perpetrated atrocious massacres not only against government forces, but also against the civilian population. In all, according to official numbers at least 150,000 Algerians were killed in the so-called black decade (*décennie noire*) beginning in 1992, and many more have “disappeared” until today. Many officers accused of having perpetrated severe human rights abuses, such as acts of torture and forced disappearances, are still in active service (Addi 2011: 94).

After the official end of the civil war, Abdelaziz Bouteflika was elected as president in 1999. Bouteflika had already served as foreign minister from 1963 until 1979 and upon becoming president assumed the office of defense minister.<sup>190</sup> He tried to reestablish Algeria’s international standing and introduced a national reconciliation law, according to which former jihadist fighters who surrendered to the authorities could get an amnesty without any criminal prosecution (Joffé 2008). This initiative was backed up by a referendum, but did not amount to a real process of truth-finding and reconciliation due to the fact that also security forces were exempt from any accountability.<sup>191</sup> In return, the army tacitly granted the president more leeway (Joffé 2008: 217). Only 7,500 former “terrorists” made use of the offered amnesty, and even less cases of disappeared persons were identified and their families compensated (ibid.; Dris-Aït Hamadouche & Dris 2012).

With the beginning of the civil war, movements associated with political Islam were largely banned from political life. However, the state still needed to have a credible ally

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<sup>188</sup> On the reasons for and implications of the pluralization of political life, see Addi (1994) and Quandt (1998). Faath (1990) offers a detailed reconstruction of the events.

<sup>189</sup> The so-called “black decade” is analyzed by i.a. Martinez (2000), Roberts (2003) and Leveau (1995).

<sup>190</sup> On Bouteflika’s past and his first presidential term see Mortimer (2004 and 2006).

<sup>191</sup> Rasmus Alenius Boserup complains about this in the following words: “Bouteflika has also offered neither ‘truth’ about the past violence nor ‘reconciliation’ with the Concorde Civil and with the Law on National Reconciliation. Instead the process has relied on amnesty and amnesia [...]” (2013: 9).

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that would support its interpretation of religion to present an alternative to the jihadist groups (Hill 2009: 195). Only one moderate Islamist party with the Arabic acronym Hamas (*Mouvement pour la Société et la Paix*, MSP) remained and was even included in the government coalition, holding ministerial portfolios since 1995.<sup>192</sup> After the ban of the FIS, no viable opposition forces were present on the political scene. Through a strategy of divide-and-rule, ruling elites provoked a fragmentation of the political landscape. According to Werenfels, this involved repression, co-optation, and the resemblance of competition between parallel institutions (2009: 184). Oppositional parties therefore always remained “weak and divided” (Zoubir & Aghrout 2012: 70). Instead, the FLN shared power with its offshoot, the *Rassemblement National Démocratique* (RND), which had been founded in 1997 and served as a fig leaf for the would-be multiparty system. The RND has been part of the government alliance and its party member Ahmed Ouyahia acted as prime minister during various periods ever since. Other known political parties included the leftist *Parti des travailleurs*, which is co-opted and busy supporting the government. A Berber-dominated party is the RCD (*Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie*), which at times has an oppositional stance, but supported the military coup of 1992. More credible is the FFS (*Front des Forces socialistes*), which is also Berber and had initially formed as a guerilla group to counter cultural and linguistic discrimination (Hill 2009: 198).

In contrast to the political parties, ever since the opening twenty-five years ago, the press landscape has been remarkably diverse, counting about one hundred regular publications in both French and Arabic (Dris 2012). While the press is flourishing, boasting four serious independent daily French newspapers and at least one Arabic counterpart, the freedom of information and speech is guaranteed to a larger degree than the freedom of association.<sup>193</sup> After the 1988 liberalization, independent trade unions were allowed to form, breaking the monopoly of mass organizations. The number of associations skyrocketed to almost 80,000, nevertheless associational life is more tightly controlled and the authorities often impede politically relevant activities by societal organizations (Dris-Aït Hamadouche 2012a: 165).<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> For an analysis of the MSP’s co-optation cf. Hamladji (2002).

<sup>193</sup> Even the press is not that much diversified geographically, as almost all newspapers have their offices not far from the Place du 1er Mai in the *Maison de la Presse*, which is well guarded and probably easy to monitor.

<sup>194</sup> On civil societal organizations in Algeria cf. Liverani (2008).

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Although more parties were allowed to compete in ballots since the early nineties, both parliamentary and presidential elections remained manipulated.<sup>195</sup> Trust in parliament was very low according to the first wave of the Arab Barometer (see also Zoubir & Aghrout 2012: 67). Consequently, vote abstention became a common feature of politics. Louisa Dris-Aït Hamadouche (2009) shows that even the official turnout figures in elections on all political levels dropped steadily and heavily between 1990 and 2007.<sup>196</sup> At that time, “the rate of participation was an all-time low, highlighting the lack of both the legitimacy of the regime and the credibility of the elections” (Zoubir & Aghrout 2012: 75).

Bouteflika slowly tried to assert his standing among the other centers of power to move closer to the neopatrimonial mode of exercising power as in most other Arab countries, first of all by reducing the army’s influence. The former predominance of the Eastern “clan” of elites hailing from Batna, Tebessa and Souk Ahras (commonly known as BTS) has been replaced by the president’s Western clan which bears the acronym TNT, referring to the cities of Tlemcen, Nedrouma, and Tiaret (Dris-Aït Hamadouche 2009). Moreover, the processes of economic liberalization and structural adjustment that became necessary in the 1990s benefited a group of army bureaucrats who evolved into a new business elite (Werenfels 2009: 182). The regime’s opaque and messy structure is nicely captured by Werenfels, who claims that “[i]n Algeria, cacophony, contestation, contradictions, and divisions are inherent in the functioning of the authoritarian state system with its multiple power centres” (2013: 13).

The level of constraining repression was very high in some domains. Algeria’s overall rating in the Political Terror Scale was 3 on the eve of the uprisings (Gibney et al. 2014). The aftermath of the civil war could still be felt in the state of emergency and a lack of civil liberties.

The Algerian security apparatus is well-known for its large capacity, which was even further expanded during the civil war: “Since the mid-1990s, Algeria has quadrupled its security forces, from 50,000 police officers in 1994 to about 200,000 officers in 2012” (Achy 2013: 12). From 2010 to 2011 alone, the number rose by 20,000, leading to a

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<sup>195</sup> For an overview over the “menu of manipulation” in different Algerian elections cf. Volpi (2006). A thorough analysis of electoral and constitutional changes until the early 2000s has been accomplished by Axtmann (2007).

<sup>196</sup> In the absence of polling institutes, Dris-Aït Hamadouche cites an online poll by the largest serious Arabic-language newspaper *El-Khabar*, in which nearly 92% of respondents declared they would not vote in the upcoming parliamentary elections (Dris-Aït Hamadouche 2009).

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ratio of one policeman per 180 citizens (Dris-Aït Hamadouche & Dris 2012). The Algerian security forces' international cooperation in combating terrorism has been rewarded with new equipment (ibid.). Moreover, "[o]fficers are well paid – their minimum wage is 65 percent more than the minimum wage in the public civil service (\$470 compared to \$280 per month) – and enjoy good career prospects, making it unlikely they would turn against the government" (Achy 2013: 12). In this sense, in Algeria heavy policing is not only due to security concerns, but also reflects an employment policy. In the public space at least in the capital, excessively more police than needed stand around idly in groups of three at every official or important building and at every intersection or corner of the road without performing any obvious tasks. The expansion of the police forces came at the expense of the other branches of the security apparatus who had tried to limit Bouteflika's scope of action, most notably the secret service, which is by some thought to be the inner core of *le pouvoir* (El Watan, 15 March 2011).

The intelligence service played a very important role behind the scenes of Algerian politics. The *Département du Renseignement et de la Sécurité* (DRS) is the agency notorious for extensive surveillance of the citizens, increasingly seeking to establish itself as an independent power center besides the military. While its pervasive activities are well-known, its head since 1990, General Mohamed Médiène, known as Toufik, keeps a secretive aura through never appearing in public. Some consider him to be Algeria's most powerful individual, although not even his face is known (Keenan 2010).

As already mentioned, the armed forces (People's National Army) are the other central pillar of the regime, numbering "approximately 140,000 active members and 100,000 reservists" (Achy 2013: 12). Due to its historical role, the first generation<sup>197</sup> of post-independence officers still dominates decision-making (Jabi 2012: 29), and the army is even said to include in its ranks "the world's eldest soldier" (Liberté, 4 June 2013).

Fights between Islamist jihadist groups and different branches of the security apparatus are ongoing despite the end of the civil war. Attacks by the former GSPC, renamed Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb, and the arrest or death of alleged terrorists were still reported in the news on a daily basis.<sup>198</sup> This gave ruling elites an "'Islamist card' [...] to play effectively on the international stage" (Volpi 2006: 444). Under the label of

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<sup>197</sup> The core elite is where they are to be found (Werenfels 2007: 56ff.). On the political implications of the generational question cf. the sociological approach by Jabi (2012).

<sup>198</sup> On the emergence and ideology of this group cf. Steinberg & Werenfels (2007).

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fighting terrorism, Islamists were the main targets of incapacitating repression. Especially after 9/11, Western allies appreciated the Algerian “expertise” in the fight against terror. During the early years of the civil war, special courts had condemned thousands of Islamist fighters and activists to decade-long prison sentences or even to death, and many of them are still imprisoned despite the dissolution of the special courts (Echorouk, 7 June 2014).

### 5.2. THE PROTESTS IN ALGERIA

#### 5.2.1. Protests before the Arab Uprisings

In Algeria, already 2010 saw a very high level of socioeconomic protests. Associational life had been confined to very narrow boundaries with hardly any room for autonomous maneuver, leaving instead street protests as the main avenue of contestation. The title of a paper by Bennadji calling 2010 “the year of 1001 riots” even understates the numbers that he finds: between 9,000 and 10,000 riots and “public incidents” were staged and police forces had to intervene on smaller scales over 100,000 times (Bennadji 2011).

One of the reasons for popular outrage was the ongoing terrorist activities by jihadist or maybe simply criminal groups who perpetrated attacks and kidnapped businessmen in Kabylia, against which citizens protested (Reuters, 22 November 2010).

Other than that, reasons for protesting were the same as in the remainder of the Arab states: discontent on both the political and socio-economic levels due to corruption, political deadlock and a growing economic imbalance. The price of basic commodities had jumped enormously in 2010 due to rising world food prices, and migration into cities led to higher living costs.<sup>199</sup> Unemployment especially among the youth was rampant, although official figures probably grossly underestimated reality, suggesting that 21.5% of all men from the age of 15-24 years and 37.6% of women of the same age were unemployed in 2010.<sup>200</sup> For the total population, an illusionary number of 10% was given. The low labor force participation rates show that the lack of jobs is even more extreme than official unemployment figures suggest. Men had a participation rate of 68.9% in 2010, with youth in the age of 15-24 years only reaching 46.5%. As regards women, the total rate stood at 14.2%, young women reaching only 8.9%. The economic downturn

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<sup>199</sup> Despite a considerable agrarian sector, food imports had risen during the past decades (Aghrout 2004).

<sup>200</sup> All figures are taken from the International Labour Organization's ILOSTAT Database, online: <http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/> rev. 02.05.14.

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was also a consequence of unequal distribution, in spite of the general assessment of a former activist that the 2000 years had witnessed “more money and fewer liberties”.<sup>201</sup> The existing political crisis was described by sociologist Daho Djerbal in the sense that protesters sought “a restoration of human or the people’s dignity by a reevaluation and a reformulation of political legitimacy” (2011: 11, author’s translation).

### 5.2.2. The Beginning of the Arab Uprisings in Algeria

The more specific “Arab spring protests” in Algeria started quite early on January 5, 2011, shortly after the beginning of the demonstrations in Tunisia. The rising costs of sugar and cooking oil triggered riots in Oran and Algiers. The price of sugar had gone up from 80 to 130 Algerian Dinars (DA) during a few months in 2010 (Le Quotidien d’Oran, 5 January 2011). On January 5, youth in Oran and some minor cities started to burn tires, block roads, throw stones etc. (Le Quotidien d’Oran, 6 January 2011). Protesters also targeted buildings owned by the largest company that has a quasi-monopoly on basic foodstuffs, Cévital (Dris-Aït Hamadouche & Dris 2012). On January 7, after the Friday prayers youth started to throw stones. Riot police armed with batons reacted by using water cannons and tear gas (BBC, 7 January 2011). Hundreds suffered injuries and three persons were killed during the protests that quickly spread throughout the country (Le Quotidien d’Oran, 9 January 2011). Also in provincial cities in the East, official buildings were raided by rioting youth. In order to preclude more unrest, football games were cancelled.

These alarming developments immediately led the government to inject millions into the market in order to keep the prices stable. For eight months, the costs of the subsidies for sugar and oil alone as well as a tax exemption on the import of these goods were set at 300 million Euros (Le Quotidien d’Oran, 12 January 2011). On January 11, advocates met and united in order to support about 2,000 youth who had been detained during the riots.<sup>202</sup>

However, it soon turned out that there was more behind the riots than disenchanting youth. According to a new law effective from 1 April, trade should become more formalized. Wholesale merchants were obliged to register their businesses, pay sums of more than 500,000 DA per check or through other written and traceable payment meth-

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<sup>201</sup> Personal interview, October 2013, Algiers.

<sup>202</sup> Personal interview with activist and advocate, October 2013, Algiers.

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ods, pay taxes, and present annual accounts (Le Soir d'Algérie, 8 January 2011). This ran counter to the interests of merchants who mostly operate informally.<sup>203</sup> In anticipation of higher expenditures, they raised the prices of basic foodstuff. So-called barons of the informal sector had the idea of spreading rumors about food shortages and instigating popular riots in order to overturn the law, which would enable them to keep their profits in the shadows.<sup>204</sup> However, they had miscalculated the regional momentum of protests and the small riots quickly got out of control, as a domino effect was anticipated.<sup>205</sup> Although the anomic micro-riots could be stopped quite quickly, another dynamic had already set in.

Similarly to Tunisia, young protesters in many Algerian cities employed the drastic means of self-immolation. These incidents were prevalent mainly in January, with 50 people trying to set themselves on fire and three of them dying because of their injuries (Amara 2012: 56). In the city of Annaba, even four young people at once threatened to set themselves on fire because of unemployment and marginalization (Le Quotidien d'Oran, 12 February 2011). The Minister of Religious Affairs and a Salafi sheikh swiftly condemned the immolations as unislamic (Magharebia, 28 January 2011).

In various places, young protesters blocked roads (ibid.). The security forces did not prevent this, instead concentrated their work on protecting central government buildings in the more sensitive areas (Volpi 2013: 107).

The new dynamic also led former FIS leader Ali Benhadj to become active again. He was arrested by the police after he had been tried to politicize the rioting youth in the popular neighborhood of Bab el Oued. He was subsequently tried in court for “inciting an armed rebellion and harming the security and integrity of the state”, but was acquitted after a few days on January 19 (Algérie1.com, 19 January 2011).

Very quickly, one week after the departure of Ben Ali from Tunisia and even before the demonstrations in Egypt catalyzed developments in other Arab states, various oppositional movements united in an alliance. This alliance called *Coordination pour le Changement et la Démocratie* (CNCD), founded on January 21, was initiated by the independent Algerian human rights organization, *Ligue Algérienne pour la Défense des*

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<sup>203</sup> Dris-Aït Hamadouche cites the official number of 61,000 merchants in the informal sector (2012b: 67).

<sup>204</sup> On the activities of the so-called “*mafia de l’agroalimentaire*” during the 1990s see Hadjadj (2001: 179-193).

<sup>205</sup> Personal interview with journalist, October 2013, Algiers.



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*Droits de l'Homme* (LADDH).<sup>206</sup> Besides the LADDH, it included NGOs, autonomous trade unions by public administration workers and teachers, an association of the unemployed, the neighborhood committee of Bab El Oued, and apart from minor leftist political parties also the Berber RCD (Communiqué de la CNCD 2011).<sup>207</sup> The movement's demands included the cancellation of the state of emergency, freedom of press and participation, and the release of the persons detained during the riots (Zoubir & Aghrout 2012: 68). Ali Yahia Abdenmour, honorary president of the LADDH and one of the initiators of the CNCD, also wanted the president to step down (ibid.: 69). The fact that President Bouteflika already held office for a third legislative period for which the constitution had to be suit-tailored made him an easy target, as he resembled the gerontocratic rulers that had been ousted in other countries. However, many organizers emphasized that the meaning that was ascribed to the CNCD especially from outside observers was somewhat exaggerated in the sense that they did not meet to plot the toppling of the regime.<sup>208</sup>

In parallel, various professional associations and workers protested for socioeconomic reasons. Different professional groups held strikes, notably many from the public sector, including paramedics, workers in public enterprises and clerks working in the legal service, among others. But although there were many different protesting groups, they competed for the same resources and therefore hardly unified around common goals, thus remaining scattered and weak.

At the same time, lots of squatters in irregular housing areas (so-called *bidonvilles*) throughout the country were evacuated from occupied houses that were destined for social housing programs, in order to allocate them to entitled persons to end their protests (Le Quotidien d'Oran, 14 February 2011). As one example, citizens who had been on the waiting list for being allotted housing by the state organization responsible for distribution of living space (*Agence Nationale pour l'Amélioration et du Développement du Logement*) for ten years forcefully entered the company's headquarters and made their demands heard (Le Quotidien d'Oran, 22 January 2011). The allocation of apartments proceeds in an opaque way and the "manipulation of lists" of benefi-

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<sup>206</sup> The LADDH had already been active under a different name during the 1988 riots (Schwarz 2002: 94).

<sup>207</sup> The Communiqué of the CNCD can be accessed on the Facebook site of "*Algérie Pacifique*", a youth organization that describes itself as a citizens collective, online: <https://www.facebook.com/notes/-alg%C3%A9rie-pacifique-le-collectif-citoyen/communiqu%C3%A9-de-la-coordination-nationale-pour-le-changement-et-la-d%C3%A9mocratie/178661528839849> rev. 21.10.13.

<sup>208</sup> Personal interviews with members of the LADDH, October and November 2013, Algiers.

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ciaries is common, which is only one of many reasons why the state cannot live up to its own promises to provide for decent (and free) living (Safar Zitoun 2012: 98).

In the regions and even in Algiers, unemployed citizens began to stage sit-ins. They organized in the “*Comité national pour la défense des droits des chômeurs*” (CNDDC) (Le Soir d’Algérie, 5 February 2011). In Kabylie, a so-called “*Coordination des comités des villages et des quartiers de Tizi-Ouzou*” formed (Le Soir d’Algérie, 25 January 2011). Also students protested throughout the country.

On January 22, the Berber political party RCD tried to hold a march, which had been banned in advance under the law of emergency, as are all demonstrations in the capital. The few RCD activists were besieged by the police in the party’s headquarters in the main street of downtown Algiers, Rue Didouche Mourad, and were not even able to leave the building in order to reach the starting point of the march. The security forces took extreme preventive measures, even trains were stopped outside the capital (Le Soir d’Algérie, 23 January 2011). In clashes with the police forces, 42 protesters suffered light injuries (Le Soir d’Algérie, 24 January 2011). In contrast, in the Kabylarian town of Béjaïa, a non-authorized march on 29 January was tolerated, drawing thousands of supporters (El Watan, 30 January 2011). On February 11, when Mubarak was ousted, dozens of RCD supporters celebrated the Egyptian revolution in front of their Algiers headquarters, chanting the pan-Arab slogan “the people want the downfall of the regime” (Le Soir d’Algérie, 12 February 2011). The regional wave of euphoria reached its peak, and exactly at this point the decisive demonstration of the Algerian protest movement was timed.

### 5.2.3. The February 12, 2011 Demonstration

The CNCD had decided to stage a protest march in the capital, which signified crossing a red line. The march was not authorized by the wilaya of Algiers, instead the organizers were offered the possibility to hold a rally in a closed hall, which they refused (Le Quotidien d’Oran, 8 February 2011). Also the Minister of Interior as well as the vice prime minister had tried to “cancel” the march (Le Quotidien d’Oran, 10 February 2011). Parties belonging to the presidential alliance distributed flyers saying “no to violence” in order to counter the mobilization attempts by the CNCD activists and to spread fear among citizens of the demonstration turning violent (El Watan, 11 February 2011). From the initiators’ perspective, the demonstration on February 12 was supposed

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to be “the beginning of popular contestation” (Le Quotidien d’Oran, 12 February 2011). However, the security forces did their best to contain the demonstration and to keep it under control at any time.<sup>209</sup> The largest demonstration in Algiers was overshadowed by an even larger presence of riot police forces belonging to the *Unités républicaines de sécurité*.

The envisaged route of the protest was to start at the Place du 1er Mai and to end at the Place des Martyrs, a couple of kilometers apart, passing through the vital squares of central Algiers which would encourage as many citizens as possible to join the march.

From the authorities’ perspective, this plan was to be thwarted at any cost. In preparation of the protest, all public transport to the capital was stopped, including trains, buses, and highway routes. Public servants and students were advised not to pursue their work in Algiers in order to keep the streets as empty as possible (Le Soir d’Algérie, 13 February 2011). Even inside the capital, security was very tight, checking cars and buses and preventing demonstrators from reaching the central meeting point at the Place du 1er Mai. All available measures of control were put into place in order to hinder any mobilizing momentum that would make the people overcome their fear of the security apparatus (and/or state power), as had happened in Egypt on January 25 (Le Quotidien d’Oran, 12 February 2011). Even internet access was blocked in Algiers and some other cities throughout the day, while some activists claimed their Facebook accounts had been deleted (The Telegraph, 12 February 2011). Many protesters, especially known activists, were arrested early on, according to some reports more than 300 persons, among them about 50 female activists (El Watan, 14 February 2011). The Minister of Interior tried to play down the number to a highly unlikely “14” (El Watan, 13 February 2011). They were held in custody at police stations and interrogated and released on the evening of the same day after the demonstration was over.<sup>210</sup> Even members of parliament from the RCD were detained shortly after the beginning of the protest, among them Tahar Besbès (ibid.). Those who were held for the longest time were leaders of the autonomous unions and online activists (ibid.).

Besides the police forces on the ground, also a police helicopter kept the protesters under surveillance. Only about 500 demonstrators were able to gather in the Place du 1er Mai on the morning of 12 February and were instantly surrounded by a number of po-

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<sup>209</sup> Personal interview with journalist, Algiers, October 2013.

<sup>210</sup> Personal interview with youth activist, Algiers, November 2013.

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licemen at least three times as high. The protesters included former FFS party leaders, former prime minister Ahmed Benbitour and a couple of other former ministers and members of parties close to the *pouvoir* (ibid.). Also a well-known singer, son of a Kabyle resistance fighter, joined the crowd with other musicians and was greeted enthusiastically (ibid.). As it was impossible to gather in one place, mainly smaller groups formed in various areas and chanted their slogans.

According to the CNCD's communiqué, the protesters' demands comprised "change, democracy, the lifting of the state of emergency, the freeing of persons detained during protests, the opening of the media and the political scene, and social justice" (Le Quotidien d'Oran, 12 February 2011). Most prominently, protesters chanted the pan-Arab slogan "the people want the downfall of the regime" and "*Djazair hurra, dimuqratiya*" (a free, democratic Algeria), as well as "Yesterday Egypt, tomorrow Algeria" (Le Quotidien d'Oran, 13 February 2011; The Guardian, 12 February 2011). The decidedly anti-regime stance was also evident in the mixed Algerian-French slogan "get out, le pouvoir" ("*barra barra ya l'pouvoir*", see El Watan 13 February 2011). The protesters also decried the president and his prime minister as "terrorist" ("*Bouteflika-Ouyahia, hukuma irhabiya*"; ibid.), and some posters said "Boutef out" – Boutef being the derogatory abbreviation for the president's name – or "down with dictatorship" (El Watan, 11 February 2011). On other posters, a multilingual regional reference was made: "One: Tunisie. Two: Egypte. Three: Viva l'Algérie!" (El Watan, 13 February 2011). Moreover, local grievances by organizations of the disappeared during the civil war added to the general slogans (Le Quotidien d'Oran, 13 February).

A minor counter-protest of regime supporters appeared on the scene (ibid.). Participants reported that youths tried to disturb the peaceful protest as agents-provocateurs who had presumably been paid by a member of the communal assembly to taint the movement's reputation (El Watan, 14 February 2011). The thugs chanted "Bouteflika is not Mubarak", but they also heatedly debated with protesters (El Watan, 13 February 2011). Police wrested posters from activists and arrested them instead of the thugs, nevertheless more people joined the protest (ibid.).

Besides the usual suspects organized in the CNCD, former FIS vice president Ali Benhadj appeared at the protest site, accompanied by supporters chanting slogans prais-

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ing him.<sup>211</sup> However, many of the other demonstrators were outraged at his arrival and tried to keep him out of their ranks, fearing that the whole protest would be discredited through the participation of such a controversial personality. Considering the control the security forces exerted over the demonstration and the fact that most youth activists were arrested early on, it can be assumed that it was an intentional decision to let him appear at the protest exactly to create this kind of division and public fear of the FIS' return.<sup>212</sup>

According to newspaper reports, repressive measures especially targeted the protest leaders. Most prominently, the elderly former leader of the LADDH, Ali Yahia Abdennour was mistreated, as well as female protesters (Le Quotidien d'Oran, 13 February 2011). When a group tried to march to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, close to the Place du 1er Mai in the Rue Belouizdad, police fired tear gas grenades.

In all, the protest had endured from 8 to 16 o'clock (El Watan, 13 February 2011). As a result of the heavy police presence, turnout was comparatively modest. This triggered a heated debate within the CNCD whether to keep up the protests on a weekly basis (Le Quotidien d'Oran, 14 February 2011). Some considered the demonstration as a "success on the political and media levels", also because it had united citizens from different social backgrounds (El Watan, 14 February 2011). Although some participants viewed it as the decisive protest that had made the people fight the "wall of fear" (ibid.), they could not overcome the wall of security forces. To other observers, the fact that 30,000 policemen were probably necessary to prevent the mass rally did not prove the regime's strength, but demonstrated the elites' panic and weakness (Le Soir d'Algérie, 13 February 2011). One of the organizers admitted that the weight of the demonstration in terms of turnout did not merit the media attention it received.<sup>213</sup> But obviously, the government assigned such an importance to the protest that it felt the need to dramatically increase the number of people on the Place du 1er Mai – even though they were security personnel.

Also in Oran the local offshoot of the CNCD had organized a minor protest in front of the municipal assembly, which was dispersed by police forces within one hour. Some 30 protesters were arrested and released later on, among them also academics (El

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<sup>211</sup> Cf. a video clip of his appearance on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o39I96w6Lq4> rev. 17.04.14.

<sup>212</sup> Various personal interviews with social scientist, journalist, and youth activist, Algiers, October and November 2013.

<sup>213</sup> Personal interview, October 2013, Algiers.

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Watan, 13 February 2011). In Annaba, unemployed youth besieged the administration building of the governorate and demanded instant job creation (El Watan, 14 February 2011).

### 5.2.4. The Aftermath and the Subsequent Development of Protests

Commenting on the demonstration, the Algerian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mourad Medelci referred to the low turnout as the proof that the protest movement represented a “minority” (El Watan, 14 February 2011). He was eager to stress that “Algeria is not Tunisia, Algeria is not Egypt” (ibid.).

The protest movement tried to continue the demonstrations, expecting a “snowball effect” that would encourage citizens to join (El Watan, 19 February 2011). However, one week afterwards, on February 19, the picture in Algiers was largely the same: very heavy police presence hindered now only dozens of protesters from moving from the Place du 1er Mai (Le Quotidien d’Oran, 20 February 2011). The slogan that prevailed was unmistakably anti-regime: “*pouvoir assassin*” (ibid.). Counter-protesters again tried to provoke the peaceful demonstrators, this time bringing along posters of Bouteflika and throwing firecrackers at the anti-regime demonstrators (ibid.). Police forces prevented a physical confrontation of the two groups. Again one week later, at the demonstration on February 26, the counter-protesters were even more aggressive, throwing stones under the eyes of the police (Le Quotidien d’Oran, 27 February 2011). Notably, participants of both demonstrations carried national flags, so the decidedly anti-regime protesters still showed their patriotism (ibid.). But even the nationalist framing did not help mobilize citizens. One organizer lamented that the more demonstrations were held, the less people showed up.<sup>214</sup>

The CNCD soon faced serious internal disputes around which strategies to pursue and also regarding the participation of different groups. E.g., the independent trade unions were offended by the presence of student associations close to the political party RCD (Le Quotidien d’Oran, 23 February 2011). The RCD’s participation in general was resented by many who remembered the party’s backing of the military coup in 1992 and thus doubted its democratic credentials.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Personal interview, October 2013, Algiers.

<sup>215</sup> Personal interview with member of the CNCD, October 2013, Algiers.

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The CNCD also discussed the possibility of calling for a general strike (El Watan, 14 February 2011). In their crisis meeting following the repressed protest, state television showed up and wanted to cover the heated discussions. This infuriated the activists, as the national TV channel had already presented the demonstration in a negative light (Le Quotidien d'Oran, 14 February 2011). Their rage, in turn, did not serve to let them appear in a more favorable way. Finally, the members could not unanimously and effectively decide whether to hold further protest marches. Instead, the alliance split into two groupings, with the political wing known as CNCD-*partis politiques* comprising the RCD and most prominently Ali Yahia Abdenmour, who were determined to keep protesting even if only very few people would participate in the marches. On the other side, the CNCD-Barakat consisting of the LADDH, the unemployed and other civil society organizations realized that due to bad timing and mobilization the conditions in Algeria were not ripe for a popular revolt. Instead, they wanted to prepare society for a democratic future through creating awareness and political education. To this aim, they held public meetings in different cities to discuss their vision for reform with local citizens (El Watan, 15 March 2011). The CNCD-Barakat remained faithful to this societal approach and refused any dialogue with *le pouvoir*.

One similar and highly relevant group that took to the streets for better payment were the communal guards, who had been recruited as auxiliary security forces besides the Gendarmerie in the rural areas during the civil war (Volpi 2013: 109). Of their total number of 94,000, their protest in March 2011 had an impressive turnout of over 10,000 and took place in downtown Algiers. When the prime minister refused to take care of their demands, they even broke through the deployed security forces to reach the building of parliament (El Watan, 8 March 2011). So their potential as challengers was considerable. Their demands were purely socioeconomic, however, as they sought a retrospective pay raise and indemnity. The positive slogan they chanted, "Bouteflika is the solution", and the posters they carried showing his portrait, illustrates the non-political character of their protest, although some of them were wearing their military fatigues (Jeune Afrique, 7 March 2011). It is quite obvious that although they broke the taboo of holding a demonstration not only in the capital, but near political institutions, their loyalty to the political order was not questioned. However, deployed police would at any rate avoid pictures of security forces struggling against each other, which would evoke

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the impression of a civil war, and rather let them declare their allegiance to the president.

While the number of protests had already been impressive in 2010, in 2011 demonstrations were staged in every single governorate (*wilaya*) of the country - nevertheless, they remained spatially and temporally confined instead of developing into a permanent threat (Dris-Aït Hamadouche & Dris 2012). Reasons were diverse and could be as minimal as the suspension of a driver's license or power outages. During the first nine months of 2012, 4,500 protests were held, two thirds of which ended in violence (Freedom House 2013). The number of self-immolations remained at a high level, with 32 persons dying from fire in 2011 (Liberté, 10 November 2012).<sup>216</sup>

Some stirrings in the formal political scene were also noticeable. In anticipation of the parliamentary elections, the Islamist party MSP left the government coalition in the beginning of 2012 in an attempt to position itself strategically, as in other Arab states Islamists had won post-Arab spring elections in a landslide (Layachi 2014: 141).<sup>217</sup> The MSP tried to reverse its co-optation and formed the so-called Green Alliance with other Islamist parties to compete in the elections.

### 5.3. STRATEGIES OF LEGITIMATION IN ALGERIA

As in most Arab states, the elites' reaction to the protests was "a combination of appeasement and force" (Zoubir & Aghrout 2012: 70). As could be seen, the actual challenge the Algerian regime faced was far from the ground-shaking developments in the 1990s. Accordingly, the government responses were highly targeted and primarily designed to prevent any further mobilization.

#### 5.3.1. Structural Legitimation: General Patterns and Crisis-specific Strategies

The demands showed that political grievances were at the heart of the legitimacy crisis in Algeria, challenging the *pouvoir* as a whole, but also single institutions. Generally speaking, no new strategies could be detected, and measures stayed behind the liberalization employed in 1989, rather reversing this opening on the legal level. The first and

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<sup>216</sup> A hospital in Oran gives even higher numbers, citing 70 in 2011 and 18 in 2012 until July (Liberté, 18 July 2012). While the number in 2010 of 30 is considerable, the risen number in 2011 is attributed to a mimicking of the Tunisian example (ibid.). In late 2013, a journalist gave the number of 80 self-immolations between 2011 and 2013, personal interview, October 2013, Algiers.

<sup>217</sup> Notably, it was at the time of the parliamentary elections in Egypt, which Islamist parties had won.



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foremost rhetorical strategy for containing the dynamics on the streets was accordingly to equate the uprising with the last comparable wave of protest and thus to deter protesters through evoking the previous outcome: civil war.

### **Legal-formal mode**

The president announced to lift the **state of emergency** that had been in place since 1992 as one of the first measures already on February 3, 2011. This was not only a response to one of the protesters' most important demands, but had even been a proposition by a group of parliamentarians from a wide range of political parties, including the ruling FLN (Le Quotidien d'Oran, 3 February 2011). Shortly after his announcement, on February 23 Bouteflika issued the presidential decree abolishing the state of emergency. This positive development was however marred, as at the same time he introduced new regulations that basically had the same effect and were in part even more draconian in charging the armed forces with the fight against terrorism and "subversion", whatever that meant. Also, suspects could be held for three months with two possible extensions. Effectively, under the guise of legal changes responding to popular demands the same procedures as before remained legal (Le Quotidien d'Oran, 26 February 2011). Already three days after the decree was announced, during a demonstration in Algiers the futility of the measure could be felt by protesters who were beaten by the police even harder than on previous occasions (Le Quotidien d'Oran, 27 February 2011).

In responding to the protesters' demands, parliament set up an **investigation committee** to find out about the sugar and oil shortages, with the results primarily blaming the large industrial food producers (Dris-Aït Hamadouche & Dris 2012). The approach was very superficial in the sense that the reasons for discontent were only searched for in the economic realm, and there only in the formal domain, veiling the true reasons behind the "sugar and oil riots" as sketched out above. The food companies, most prominently Cévital, did not even feel the need to react to the parliamentary commission's hearing invitation (La Tribune, 14 November 2011).<sup>218</sup>

An ad hoc institution was set up in May 2011 to recommend reforms, the "*Commission Nationale de Consultations sur les Réformes Politiques*". It was presided over by the speaker of the upper house of parliament, Abdelkader Bensalah, and came to be known

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<sup>218</sup> The head of Cévital was said to be "close to the anti-Bouteflika camp in the army" (Werenfels 2007: 65).

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as the Bensalah Commission. Due to this very fact it was not expected to present any audacious recommendations, moreover it was staffed with the president's advisers (Layachi 2014: 140). Bensalah was a founding member of the second regime party RND and had already been the spokesman of the national dialogue committee during the civil war. The Bensalah commission invited organizations such as the UGTA, women's associations and well-known personalities to listen to their suggestions for reform. Effectively, the bulk of the participants were actors close to the ruling elites or elites themselves. Among the personalities who were consulted was i.a. General Khaled Nezzar, who had served as Minister of Defense from 1990 to 1993, was one of the masterminds behind the military coup and had later been part of the ruling military junta. Interestingly, hardly any of the consulted persons and groups even found it necessary to make their suggestions accessible to the public (L'Expression, 25 June 2011).

Due to the lack of credibility that was ascribed to the Bensalah commission from the outset, it was boycotted by many former politicians, even high-ranking ones such as former presidents and prime ministers, and political parties, notably the RCD and FFS (Jeune Afrique, 23 June 2011). Also the LADDH was asked to participate, but refused, as did other organizations that were part of the CNCD and the Berber movement (Le Quotidien d'Algérie, 19 June 2011).<sup>219</sup> In contrast, young Algerians were not invited at all (Tout sur l'Algérie, 24 May 2011). A newspaper article scoffingly presented the pictures of self-proclaimed representatives of dubious youth organizations "which even Google didn't know", all well closer to the age of 50 than 40 (El Watan, 10 June 2011). After one month only, the commission presented its results to the president, which consisted basically of suggestions and demands by different actors. Ironically, despite the limited variance of consulted citizens and organizations, the suggestions still went beyond intended concessions. They included the dissolution of the unrepresentative parliament, a return to the limitation of the presidential term to a maximum of two mandates, and even the establishment of a constituent assembly (El Watan, 23 June 2011). To nobody's surprise, the propositions were shelved.<sup>220</sup>

The parliamentary elections were not held early. However, a battery of legal changes was promulgated in January 2012: the laws on elections, political parties, associations,

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<sup>219</sup> Personal interview with member of the LADDH, October 2013, Algiers.

<sup>220</sup> Constitutional reforms were even deferred until after the presidential elections of 2014 and considerations then did not take into account the previous deliberations.

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and information. In the run-up to the parliamentary elections to be held in May 2012, a new **electoral law** was put in place raising the number of mandates in the lower house from 389 to 462 (Zoubir & Aghrout 2012: 75). This can be regarded as a classical measure of co-opting potential opposition figures by enlarging the number of individuals that directly profit from the political structures, as deputies receive a salary that is “twenty times the Algerian minimum wage” (Dris-Aït Hamadouche & Dris 2012). The age of eligibility was also lowered from 28 to 23 years (article 78 of the electoral law), which before had been a discrimination against the youth (Jeune Afrique, 26 June 2011).

Another reform that at first glance seemed like a boost to political life was a new **political parties law** ratified in December 2011. It led to establishment of 21 new parties by April 2012, so that 44 parties took part in the parliamentary elections in May of that year (Zoubir & Aghrout 2012: 74). This development was remarkable, as in the 20 years before only one new party formation – the FLN offshoot RND – had been authorized. But what looked like a step towards a more vibrant political scene was mainly the result of dissidents from the dominant parties who founded their own one-man shows (ibid.). The potential for renewal can thus be doubted, and even if some party leaders seem charismatic, they lack public visibility and grassroots. Volpi characterized this development as an “expansion of the regime’s patronage network via business politics” (2013: 112). In the place of internal regime mechanisms for solving conflicts and for rejuvenation, the proliferation of parties externalized such processes. While the presidential alliance of political parties had dissolved in the run-up to the parliamentary elections, the “dumping” of well-known politicians to new parties allowed for superficially new power constellations that enabled a continuation of the status quo (Dris 2013). Most prominently, the Minister of Public Works, Amar Ghoul, left the MSP after the party had split from the presidential alliance in order to keep his ministerial post, and created his own Islamist-nationalist party with the rather pathetic name TAJ (*tajammu’ amal al-Djaza’ir*, literally “the union of Algeria’s hope”). Of course, he left the MSP only after winning a mandate in Algiers as the leader of the Green Alliance list and then took other MSP deputies to his new TAJ. In all, of six newly formed Islamist parties, three were spin-offs from the MSP, also in other cases led by high cadres, which gave a

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severe blow to the party (ibid.).<sup>221</sup> This was clearly the MSP's punishment for having ended co-optation.

In order to retain control over the political party landscape, any party must seek to “anchor the values and fundamental components of Algerian society, notably the values of the revolution of November 1, 1954” (article 11 of the law on political parties). Moreover, it is stipulated in article 9 that no party must resemble a party that has been dissolved. This regulation is directed towards the former FIS, as is article 5, which prohibits the engagement of religious personnel in political parties with explicit reference to the “national tragedy” (Dris-Aït Hamadouche & Dris 2012). In contrast, repenting former terrorists were allowed to form new parties (Dris-Aït Hamadouche 2012b: 61).

The requisites for creating a new party are not exactly unattainable, as only two members per *wilaya* in one fourth of the 48 governorates are required (article 19). The Ministry of Interior, which is in charge of controlling the establishment of new parties, can veto each founding member (article 29). Political parties represented in parliament receive state funding according to the number of their mandates (article 58). In all, these regulations were not spectacular and did not signify a game-changing level, except for facilitating the proliferation of micro-parties. This turned out to be extremely useful for the **parliamentary elections** that were held in May 2012. As in all elections, the mobilization of voters was a hard task, this time also against calls for a boycott by the former FIS leaders Madani and Benhadj (El Watan, 16 March 2012). In preparation of the elections, the Ministry of Interior sent out text messages to millions of mobile phone users calling on them to cast their votes (Liberté, 23 January 2012). Moreover, although mosques were regarded as taboo places for political campaigning, even prohibited by law, the Minister for Religious Affairs and Endowments (*awqaf*) qualified the act of voting as the citizens' duty commanded by Islam, which imams should mention in their Friday sermons (ibid.). Implicitly, he qualified abstaining from the ballot as unislamic behavior.<sup>222</sup>

The RCD boycotted the elections, as the party congress overwhelmingly voted against presenting any candidates and called on the population to boycott likewise. Atmane Mazouz, former head of the RCD's parliamentary bloc of 19 deputies who had laid

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<sup>221</sup> For an overview of Islamist actors in Algeria after the uprisings see Werenfels (2002).

<sup>222</sup> Already in 2009, the same minister had tried this strategy, referring to the parliamentary elections as the Islamic concept of “*shura*” (literally: consultancy), in which the citizens should participate (El Watan, 17 February 2009).

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down his mandate in February 2011, called the elections an “insult” to the Algerian citizens as nothing new could be expected and turnout promised to be low (Jeune Afrique, 8 May 2012).

On the day of the elections, turnout was reported as being as high as 42%, although this number mocked the reality many voters and observers witnessed in the polling stations (New York Times, 12 May 2012). Moreover, citizens were suspicious as “certain areas showed dramatic increases in turnout during the day’s hottest hours” (NDI 2012: 23). Furthermore, as the Ministry of Interior announced a turnout that topped the 2007 result even before the polling stations were supposed to close, it seemed to be an illogical move to then extend the voting time by one hour in three quarters of all governorates (ibid.). In the official press conference after the elections, the Minister of Interior accounted for the weak participation in the populous northern part of the country presenting the argument that voters had used the holidays to go to the beach or camping, while the citizens in the South were “patriots”.<sup>223</sup> A less ridiculous reason would be that army personnel were allowed to vote and many were stationed in the southern governorates (Le Monde, 12 May 2012). Moreover, it was suspected that army members were registered as voters both in their hometowns and “in multiple deployment sites”, leading to an increase of voters by 4 million in contrast to 2009 which could not be accounted for (NDI 2012: 18).

The voting system stipulated the allocation of seats in each district according to the proportional share of votes over 5%. Also, a women’s quota was included in the party lists, although it remained unclear how exactly seats would be allocated (NDI 2012: 15f.). In the end, women attained 146 seats, which is equivalent to 31.6% of parliamentary mandates, a striking rise from the 7% before, catapulting Algeria to the ostensibly most progressive place in the Arab world (NDI 2012: 29). However, the remainder of the elections outcomes decried any progressive development.

The diversity of parties, especially of newly founded parties, allowed the ailing FLN to retain upper hand and attain the relative majority of seats in parliament (208 seats, 45% of all mandates) despite garnering only about 1,400,000 votes out of 21 million regis-

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<sup>223</sup> A video clip of the question and his statement can be accessed online: <https://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=293357780755737> rev. 23.04.14.

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tered voters.<sup>224</sup> Volpi analyzes that “by encouraging an explosion of tiny new parties in an attempt to make the political field appear more pluralistic, the regime in fact (re)produced an ultradominant-party system” (2013: 113). Not impressed by absolute numbers, a member of the politbureau commented dryly: “Algerians have voted for FLN” (Liberté, 14 May 2013). The enlarged parliament also made it easier to sweepingly enlarge the FLN’s bloc in the lower house to 208 mandates up from 136 that had been won in the 2007 elections, although back then the share of votes had been almost 23% (Dris 2013). So amazingly, with the worst result in the FLN’s history, it still increased its mandates.

The largest “party” besides the non-voters consisted of those who cast invalid ballots. 18% of citizens who went to cast their vote demonstrated their rejection of all political parties in this way, even surpassing the number of FLN voters (NDI 2012: 27). Adding the non-voters to the blank voters, an overwhelming majority of Algerian citizens mocked their elites’ quest for legitimacy. Nevertheless, due to the favorable electoral framework, the ruling parties retained upper hand. Adding the 6.8% of absolute votes for the RND, which converted into 14.7% of parliament seats, the FLN and its minor partner conquered 69% of the lower house through winning 24% of the national vote. 25 other parties and independent alliances shared the rest of the mandates. This shows that the strategy to fragment the party landscape was both deliberate and successful. More than that, the FLN even crushed its own partners, as the RND had held about half the number of the FLN’s mandates before and was reduced to less than a third of the former single party’s seats (down from 61 versus 136 to 68 versus 208).

The Islamist Green Alliance was not rewarded by the voters, who remembered that the MSP had remained firmly in government throughout 2011 and only left the presidential alliance in January 2012, when it considered how Islamic movements had gained regional momentum (Volpi 2013: 113). The poor result of merely 6% of the vote, which translated into 10% of seats, presents Algeria as a regional outlier, but then citizens had experienced the consequences of Islamist electoral success before (Dris 2013). It is worthwhile noting that despite the enlarged lower house, the Islamist alliance won less

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<sup>224</sup> To put this figure into historical context: In the legislative elections of 1991, which the FLN dramatically lost to the FIS, it had won 1.6 million votes out of 13 million registered voters, as opposed to the FIS’ 3.2 million (Addi 1994: 176).

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mandates than the MSP alone had held before.<sup>225</sup> Dris explains this development through the leadership's learning that processes similar to those in other Arab states had to be avoided under all circumstances. Moreover, it should be kept in mind that the successful engineering of the elections did not come as a surprise, as the elites had never lost control over political processes, in contrast to states where the uprisings had resulted in a loss of the incumbents' power.

Even political parties that had been part of the CNCD, namely the Berber FFS took part in the 2012 elections instead of boycotting, as it had previously done on various occasions. The FFS thus opted for a "normalization" of relations with the *pouvoir*, trying to benefit from membership in parliament rather than fundamental opposition. However, many party activists resented their leadership's decision as complicity with and legitimation of the *pouvoir*, and the last hopes for the emergence of an alternative to the political institutions from within the established parties vanished (Dris 2013).

Also after the parliamentary elections, deputies, especially independent ones, defected to other parties. This development that had already been common practice before, benefiting the two grand parties, was denounced in newspapers as "political nomadism" (Liberté, 5 December 2012). Many observers were outraged that the new law did not put an end to it (Dris-Aït Hamadouche 2012b: 61). In all, the result of the parliamentary elections (and likewise municipal elections which followed some months later) was "nothing but to reproduce the prevalent political order" (Dris 2013).

The election process proper was monitored by a "*commission nationale de supervision des élections*", the establishment of which was stipulated in the electoral law and which had also existed before. Its members were "exclusively" designated by the president (article 168). One of its duties is to supervise the "*commission nationale de surveillance des élections*", which has the proper task of overseeing elections. It consists also of party members, who can oversee elections in the polling stations (article 172 of the electoral law). Both boards were not independent, however. Moreover, a small team of international observers led by the NDI was invited to lend credibility to the voting process, in turn complaining about the "lack of clarity about the roles of the various oversight commissions" (NDI 2012: 7). Individuals were also allowed to monitor the elec-

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<sup>225</sup> Hamladji argues that the MSP's overvaluation in previous elections was a deliberate strategy of co-optation: pretending large popular support of coalition partners in order to demonstrate the consensual nature of government and reject oppositional allegations of being little representative (2002: 17).

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toral process at their respective polling station, but the initiative of an alliance founded by diverse civil society organizations for observing the elections was rejected by the authorities (NDI 2012: 26). The room for maneuver that domestic associations enjoyed had already begun to dwindle.

Regarding the **associational** sphere, a new law was adopted in December 2011 which was more restrictive than the regulation from the liberalizing period in 1990, countering all potential for the development of an autonomous associational sphere.<sup>226</sup> Even in parliament, several oppositional parties abstained from voting on the legal changes, notably the MSP and other Islamist parties (El Watan, 14 December 2011). They protested against the clause that religious associations should be subjected to special regulations. After the promulgation in January 2012, already existing associations were given two years to adapt to the regulations of the revised law. According to Dris-Aït Hamadouche and Dris (2012), more than 80,000 associations of all kinds exist in Algeria. Should the organizations fail to register according to the new law, article 46 stipulates prison terms of three up to six months for active members of unregistered or dissolved associations. The margin of action is circumscribed by regulations that are more than vaguely formulated and invite arbitrary interpretation: associations “must not harm national sovereignty, the established institutional order, national unity or the integrity of the national territory, public order and morality, the civilizational values of the Algerian people” (article 65). One of the modifications that drew the anger of associations themselves was the wording in article 39 that Algerian associations were to be dissolved if they “intervened in the country’s internal affairs or damaged national sovereignty” (Loi relative aux associations, 12 January 2012). While the new law is anxious to separate associations from political parties, individual leaders from the associational sphere often run for elected offices as members of the ruling parties (Dris-Aït Hamadouche & Dris 2012). The state intervenes in subsidizing organizations on all administrative levels according to article 29, if “the authority recognizes the activity as being of general interest and public benefit” (ibid.).<sup>227</sup> Any other funding has to be authorized in advance (article 30). The amended law represented the codification of illiberal policies that had been practiced before in contradiction to the legal prescriptions dating from the liberal phase of

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<sup>226</sup> Personal interview with human rights activist, October 2013, Algiers.

<sup>227</sup> Apparently, associations that had publicly supported Bouteflika's reelection in 2004 and 2009 benefited financially (Dris-Aït Hamadouche & Dris 2012).



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the early nineties (Liberté, 12 January 2014). Especially foreign associations, either international or transnational organizations or institutions from other countries were met with more suspicion than before.

Likewise, an **information law** was adopted on the same day, again against the MSP bloc's vote, which was presented as opening up the media sphere to private TV channels etc. Up to this point, Algeria had been the only North African country besides Libya without private media (Dris 2012). What was appreciated as a positive development was the fact that press-related offenses should not be punished by imprisonment any longer (ibid.). However, articles 84 and 92 of the new law effectively curb the freedom of information through limiting journalist work in vaguely defined areas regarded as sensitive, such as military secrets, state security, national economic interests, national sovereignty, national identity, and national history (El Watan, 15 December 2011). As in the case of the associational law, the vague wording leaves the door wide open for interference in journalist work (Dris 2012). According to Chérif Dris, the legal text seeks to encourage self-censorship and to "exert total control over society", among other things through only allowing Algerians and Algerian financing to be involved in the media (article 4; ibid.). At the same time, article 50 of the law establishes a regulatory authority to supervise the written press, of which the majority of members are to be nominated by parliament and other state institutions, the head is appointed by the president, and participating journalists must have "at least 15 years of experience" (ibid.). Deputies who had voted against the laws and complained that they had become "devoid of their substance" (El Watan, 15 December 2011) tried in vain to obtain an intervention by the president to effectuate a second reading of the laws in parliament, but he refused (ibid.).

Another measure of legal change that was announced in the president's speech in April 2011 and had been under discussion ever since was another amendment of the constitution. The reform package of fall 2011, however, did not include the creation of the promised constitutional commission. Later, when the president became incapable of filling his post, it was expected that constitutional amendments would be suit-tailored for the ailing president, foremost by introducing the post of a vice-president in order to make decision-making processes possible, but the actual legal process did not take off during the time span under consideration.

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### Symbolic mode

The “reform” package that was passed on the legal level was flanked by democracy rhetoric, which at the same time also stressed the factor of stability. On 15 April 2011, President Bouteflika gave his first public speech after the beginning of the uprisings, which had been widely anticipated. However, he looked tired and indirectly conveyed the message that all “changes were to be superficial”, rather than radical (Dris-Aït Hamadouche & Dris 2012). A human rights activist suggested that the speech was primarily directed towards an external audience.<sup>228</sup> Nevertheless, it was held in classical Arabic.<sup>229</sup>

Bouteflika started by praising the achievement of peace and infrastructural programs for improving the socioeconomic situation (Bouteflika 2011). Only then did he refer to the regional context, with the primary aim of demarcating the Algerian “difference”. He stressed the national sovereignty of each state and rejected any “foreign interference” and specified the wish for stability as the “position of the overwhelming majority of our people” (ibid.). While the president referred to “democracy, liberty, justice and rule of law” as “legitimate demands”, he was more occupied with talking about “legitimate *social* demands” (italics are mine) and promised socioeconomic improvements.

The argumentation that was also employed later followed the line of incremental changes to prepare society for democracy, which comes only at the end of an indefinitely long evolutionary process. While Bouteflika mentioned the buzzword “democracy” quite often, it appeared in a rather inconsistent manner as regards the question whether he qualified the Algerian regime as already being democratic and having to preserve this status or whether to “deepen” or “strengthen” democracy. In the April 2011 speech, he referred to pluralism not without evoking the civil war, before mentioning all measures of political reform that were taken in the course of that year. Notably, he stressed his own constitutional role and the weight of formal institutions.

Again, in a written speech that was handed out to journalists on the day after parliament had passed the laws restricting the public sphere, the president talked – or rather wrote – of “implanting the democratic process” and enumerated all buzzwords that are associat-

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<sup>228</sup> Personal interview, October 2013, Algiers.

<sup>229</sup> Nait-Brahim interprets the use of classical Arabic by politicians in general as a means of excluding both the people who speak Algerian or Berber dialect and Francophone opposition members in an attempt to “control the shortest route to the hearts of the people through Islam whose sacred book is written in standard Arabic” (2012: 104). On the social implications of diglossia in Algeria cf. Addi (1994: 211-216).

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ed with good governance (El Watan, 15 December 2011). However, he did not miss out on mentioning stability and security as his core achievements, which served as the basis on which a free society could be built (ibid.).

Besides employing the standard talk, the president also used more dramatic framing. In his 2012 speech on the anniversary of the massacre of Sétif on 8 May 1945, which is commonly regarded as one of the decisive starting points in Algeria's liberation struggle, Bouteflika tried to mobilize voters for the elections by framing the latter as a struggle for stability.<sup>230</sup> In this sense, he equated the anticolonial mobilization with voter mobilization and also sought popular support for the reforms he had initiated the year before (Dris 2013). He inflated the meaning of the elections to "a proof of the country's credibility" and marked them as "exceptional" (Bouteflika 2012). More specifically, he appealed to "our collective aspiration to establish constitutional institutions, the credibility and the legitimacy of which will not be questioned" (ibid.). Notably, he held the speech already during the silence period before the elections in which no campaigning was allowed to take place anymore (NDI 2012: 22). If the timing of the elections was not a coincidence, it was perfectly orchestrated for offering the president the opportunity for little veiled references to the FLN's past achievements and a last call to vote.

The most important narrative that politicians used in order to negate and avoid a regional spillover effect stated that Algeria should be spared the "Arab spring" because it had already been the pioneer of such a movement. As one of the first, the foreign minister claimed that Algeria would be spared the Arab spring unrest because it had gone through it before in 1988 (Le Quotidien d'Oran, 27 February 2011). Also later in the run-up to the elections, the slogan "our spring is Algeria" was displayed on public posters with the picture of a ballot box (NDI 2012: 21).

### **Policy mode**

The fight against corruption was seen as one of the most important tasks for Algerian politics, as all observers and interview partners lamented about corruption as being pervasive and growing.<sup>231</sup> And actually, over the recent years some large scandals have been made public. However, this did not necessarily happen in an effort to curb high-scale corruption, but was in some instances part of an ongoing power struggle between

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<sup>230</sup> His words were: "As the Algerian people came out on this day 67 years ago, united, mobilized [...] I call on you all to come out in crowds on election day to initiate a new stage in the process of development, reforms and democratic evolution in your country, Algeria" (Bouteflika 2012).

<sup>231</sup> On corruption in earlier years see Hadjadj (2001).

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the president and the intelligence services, with the latter trying to discredit the former using their information (Keenan 2010).

Most importantly, the corruption cases involving the state's oil firm Sonatrach symbolized the fight between different political factions or "clans" and caused a public outcry. It ended in May 2011 with the company's CEO's conviction for the misuse of public funds, only to be followed by the so-called "Sonatrach-II scandal" in early 2013. In this case "the head of Eni, a state-owned Italian oil and gas company and the leading foreign energy operator in Algeria, came under investigation for his alleged involvement in a \$265 million bribery case to win contracts assigned by Sonatrach" (Achy 2013: 5). In the first half of 2012 alone, 510 lawsuits were dealt with in court and more than 700 individuals were convicted of corruption (Dris 2013).

As anti-corruption policies were obviously a function of political opportunity rather than transparency, citizens themselves tried to counter corruption. An "*Association Algérienne de Lutte contre la Corruption*" was already active and was met with repression by the authorities (Ennahar, 15 September 2010). On a somewhat broader basis, the "*Association nationale de lutte contre la corruption*" (ANLC) was founded in July 2012, to which cases of corruption could be anonymously reported on its website.<sup>232</sup> It is hardly surprising that the association was denied registration by the Ministry of Interior, as the aspiring civil society as a whole was going through a hard time (Le Quotidien d'Oran, 7 November 2012). Ironically, the fight against corruption thus became illegal, as a functionary of the association complained.<sup>233</sup> This was especially bitter because the president himself had stated in his April 2011 speech that the citizens' participation was needed in fighting corruption.

Absurdly, leftist party leader Louisa Hanoune blamed large-scale corruption during privatization processes (or even only plans for privatization) solely on external incitement or influence (Liberté, 25 February 2013). This shows at the same time a nationalist as well as a state-centered approach which she expected to resonate with the population.

### Responses

In many areas, the harsh responses towards regime strategies are a function of their effectiveness in muting opposition instead of garnering legitimacy. The lifting of the state of emergency can be regarded as a failure on the level of popular perception, as the me-

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<sup>232</sup> Online at <http://anlc-dz.org/> rev. 10.02.14.

<sup>233</sup> Personal interview, November 2013, Algiers.

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dia swiftly revealed the shallow façade reform that was accompanied by the introduction of similar regulations at exactly the same time (Le Quotidien d'Oran, 26 February 2011). Despite the opposition's disbelief that such a measure would be sold as progress, the legal basis for repression remained.

The Bensalah commission was not even mentioned by most interview partners when discussing the political changes two years later. Youth activists complained that the commission only consulted established personalities (Tout sur l'Algérie, 24 May 2011). The boycott by not only serious reformers, but even former top elites is a strong indicator that the commission was not taken seriously at all. Ali Yahia Abdenmour complained that the pouvoir was holding dialogue with itself instead of with the citizens (Le Quotidien d'Oran, 16 June 2011). In a similar vein, the RCD called it “a monologue against change”.<sup>234</sup>

The attempt to mobilize voters through using religious arguments enraged Salafis who wanted to stage a campaign countering this practice (El Watan, 16 March 2012). Commenting on the low turnout in Algerian elections, Louisa Dris-Aït Hamadouche generally remarks that “abstention is a default mode of contestation resulting directly from the failure of the political class” (Dris-Aït Hamadouche 2009). In Algeria, this gap between elites and the population could not be closed through the process of electoral reform, especially as manipulation was widespread. The alleged rise in voter turnout can at least serve to interpret what the elites wanted the numbers to look like and what they thought they could get away with. Nevertheless, the tumultuous constituting session of the national assembly, in which the Green Alliance deputies left parliament in protest, shows that even the part of the political class that profited somewhat denounced the electoral process.

The law on associations drew basically the complete existing civil society into illegality, as it was virtually impossible to attain the necessary registration. This affected not only new foundations, but also long-standing institutions which partially lost their status. This state of legal insecurity drove various international organizations out of the country. Some associations presented a petition to protest against this law even before it was promulgated, however, with very little attention. A human rights association com-

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<sup>234</sup> The statement was published in Dernières Nouvelles d'Algérie, 21 June 2011, which is currently not accessible except online at <http://www.algerie360.com/algerie/le-cirque-de-la-commission-bensalah-s%E2%80%99acheve-dans-lindifference-le-grand-flop-de-bouteflika/> rev. 22.05.14.

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plained that civil society organizations were basically regarded as “enemies of the nation” (El Watan, 15 December 2011).

A larger alliance against the law was formed as late as in November 2013, when many civil society organizations had made the experience that they simply could not register anew to comply with the modified regulations. A representative of a youth organization made the Kafkaesque experience that first, the Ministry of Interior simply did not react to the application for license renewal and nobody would answer the phone in the office he was referred to.<sup>235</sup> Lacking even basic information about the modalities of the application procedure, the second attempt at registration was not positively answered either.<sup>236</sup> This was also due to the fact that the detailed administrative regulations on how the law should be applied were never publicized, not even after the transitional period (Liberté, 12 January 2014). A human rights activist and lawyer qualified the package of legal reforms an “extremely grave regression” in comparison to the texts adopted in the 1990s.<sup>237</sup>

In contrast to the legal changes, the non-legitimizing effect of which was obvious to the target groups, the symbolic mode was much more successful. All of my interview partners declared that the stability discourse with the deterrent reference to the civil war resonated with the population.

The third wave of the Arab Barometer from 2013 shows somewhat surprising results, which might be interpreted as successful relegitimation – or as resignation.<sup>238</sup> 78% of respondents approved of the statement that gradual reform is preferable over sudden reform to reach approximately the level of 2006, while in 2011 only 54% had agreed to this statement.<sup>239</sup> The question is whether this can be regarded as the approval of their elites’ slow pace or a function of the disruptions that accompanied the very sudden changes in neighboring countries. Another indicator to shed more light on this matter is the overall satisfaction with the government, which went up from 10% in 2011 to 40%

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<sup>235</sup> Interpretations of the Algerian structures as kafkaesque include Roberts (2003: 128) and Schlumberger (2004a: 161).

<sup>236</sup> Remarks by president of a youth organization at the press conference for presenting the petition against the associations law, Algiers, 1 November 2013.

<sup>237</sup> Personal interview, October 2013, Algiers.

<sup>238</sup> The complete results have not been published yet, but a paper by the survey’s director gives some first numbers (Robbins 2014).

<sup>239</sup> The wording of the question was: “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Political reform must be implemented in stages gradually (step by step) rather than immediately”?” (Codebook Arab Democracy Barometer Wave II 2010-2011, Q514, 37).

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in 2013 (Robbins 2014: 4). Likewise, the number of respondents who evaluated the state of democracy and human rights in Algeria as good went up from 6% in 2011 to 30% in 2013 (ibid.). However, the share of respondents who assessed it as “very good” remained the same, at 2%. This suggests that it is less the perception of the situation that has changed, but the people’s inclination to show open discontent. Moreover, only 42% stated that the freedom to participate in peaceful protests is guaranteed to a medium or great extent (ibid.: 5).

Corruption was so widely lamented that the politically motivated campaigns did not reach their desired effects as a fig leave.

*Table 5.1: Structural Legitimation Strategies in Algeria*

Addressees	Legal mode	Symbolic mode	Policy mode	Success?
<b>All citizens</b>	Parliamentary elections Associations and information law reforms	Reform discourse	Fighting corruption	No?
<b>Pro-reform protesters</b>	Lifting the state of emergency Electoral reform			No
<b>Regime elites</b>	Bensalah commission Monitoring elections Political party law reform			Yes / No (MSP)
<b>Formal opposition</b>	Electoral reform			Yes (FFS) / no (RCD)

### 5.3.2. Traditional Legitimation

Algeria used to be a very revolutionary republic, with progress and the virtues of the professional military at the center of legitimation strategies, as already described. As this has been the case for more than 50 years now, it might be possible to argue that the reference to the Algerian revolution itself has become something like a tradition. However, this stretches the meaning of tradition as employed here, which primarily rests on hereditary succession and in a secondary meaning on the exercise of rule in accordance with traditional norms and leaders. This does not mean that republics never engage in traditional legitimation. Other Arab republics installed dynastic succession as a traditional element of legitimation or at least tried to do so (Syria; attempts in Egypt, Libya,

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Yemen). The uprisings put an end to familial succession plans in all of the other North African republics.

In Algeria, the president's brother Said had taken on a more active role during the past few years as an unofficial adviser to his 20 years older brother and assumed a central position as a campaign manager in his reelections. While Said Bouteflika's informal influence behind the scenes was remarkable, attempts to install him as vice president or through a newly founded party were quickly aborted.<sup>240</sup> Despite the president's health problems, no serious efforts at engineering a familial succession to the ailing president could be noted during the period under investigation. So far, neither the regime structure nor the political culture allows for an intrafamilial succession scenario. First, the Algerian regime is by far not as personalized as "real" neopatrimonial regimes. Secondly, a non-military leader holding a PhD in informatics who mainly has the backing of businessmen is unlikely to be accepted by *les décideurs*.<sup>241</sup> At least, the leadership probably didn't want to endanger its identity-related nationalist legitimization strategies of referencing to the revolution through inventing tradition in the delicate domain of the structure of political rule.

According to Dris-Aït Hamadouche and Dris (2012), traditional leaders were instrumental in containing local protests, predominantly in the periphery. They cite tribal leaders, Sufi sheikhs and clan chiefs especially in Kabylia. However, tribal structures only play a role for a minority of the population, and both mentioned groups can be subsumed under religious or nationalist-inspired strategies of identity-related legitimization.

### 5.3.3. Identity-related Legitimation

The national identity that the FLN leadership had tried to create consisted of a two-fold dominance of Arabic as only official language and Islam as the religion of the state, discriminating against the Berber-speaking and French-educated population as well as

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<sup>240</sup> The "*Rassemblement pour la concorde nationale*" was founded in late 2010 (Le Quotidien d'Oran, 30 November 2010). According to an interview given by the party's leader, the goal was to offer its would-be honorary president Said Bouteflika a platform to compete in the presidential elections in 2014 in case his brother would not run (Le Matin, 21 December 2010). Already on the next day, the party functionary rushed to deny the complete plan as being only a product of his own imagination and asserted that neither of the Bouteflikas had any connection to the party whatsoever (Le Soir d'Algérie, 23 December 2010).

<sup>241</sup> Nonetheless, one reading of the parliamentary elections and ongoing power struggles suggests that the Bouteflika clan tried to regain control of the FLN by ousting illoyal members and pushing aside the other parties in the presidential alliance (Le Matin, 15 May 2012). In this sense, Said Bouteflika would be the main winner of the new balance of powers after 2012.



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the tiny religious minorities. During the Arab uprisings, such identity-related grievances took a back seat. Protests in Kabylia were both more widespread and more tolerated than in Algiers, but focused on all-Algerian issues and resulted from the mobilization of the political parties that are active in this region. The RCD and the FFS, the most important political parties that advocate secularism and cultural equality and assemble many Kabyle citizens, joined the opposition. However, legitimization strategies largely focused on the perpetuation of the historical founding myth. The matter of cultural diversity was ignored, if not exploited against the protesters.

### 5.3.3.1 Nationalism

The foundational myth of Algerian national history, the war of liberation, is the central point for garnering revolutionary or historic legitimacy. As it serves to instill a sense of national pride and cohesion – besides glorifying the political elite which is staffed by former revolution fighters – it can be subsumed under the nationalist subtype of identity-related legitimization. However, already in the past difficulties arose from “promoting a definition of the nation that is rejected and opposed by a significant number of Algerians” (Hill 2009: 200).

Since the mid-1990 years and throughout the 2000s, many “new ‘markers’ of collective memory (museums, statues, historical associations, etc.)” have been established, often with reference to the president’s patronage (DeGeorges 2009: 286). Veterans of the war of independence (*mujahidin*, including a religious connotation of the term) are widely respected and enjoy “virtual sacralisation” (Branche 2011: 437). They receive social benefits, pensions and prestige not least in exchange for loyalty to their former comrade Bouteflika (Davis & Serres 2013: 106). Over the past decades, more groups were included in the relevant definition of beneficiaries, raising the original 6,000 *maquis* fighters to half a million profiteers by the end of the 1990s years, by then also including the martyrs’ children (Branche 2011: 431f.).<sup>242</sup> Nevertheless, this glorification of the youth of the 1950s is at the same time a structural discrimination against today’s youth who have hardly experienced the civil war of the 1990s.

The only strategies referring to nationalism that were used for legitimization during the relevant time span were situated on the symbolic level.

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<sup>242</sup> There are even “false *mujahidin*” who try to profit from the benefits (Branche 2011: 431).

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### Symbolic mode

In official discourse on the Arab uprisings, the quest for stability was equaled with the fight against terrorism during the civil war on the one hand and with the fight against colonialism during the war of independence on the other hand. Out of these different historical events which constitute important elements of a legitimization narrative, the elites created an amalgam which was very hard to confront for challengers.<sup>243</sup> These past situations that endangered not only regime stability, but the integrity and very existence of the Algerian state are fit to invoke the memory of horrors that should be avoided at any cost. In contrast, the struggle against these challenges is depicted as heroic. In this context, the martyrs play an important role for legitimization, and the president invoked them e.g. in concluding his politically important “reform” speeches (Bouteflika 2011 and 2012).

Besides the historical momentum, the example of neighboring countries is an important point of reference in terms of stability. The president framed the regional “winds of change” in the context of denouncing “all foreign interference” in his April 2011 speech (Bouteflika 2011). Regarding the aspect of security, especially the Libyan border had become dangerous with jihadist fighters, rebel groups and Gaddafi’s friends and family pouring in.<sup>244</sup> During my stay, some interview partners told me that already the fact of talking to a foreigner made them traitors in the eyes of some, as suspicion vis-à-vis strangers had increased since the beginning of the uprisings.

What is very delicate in the Algerian case is the *mélange* of historical and cross-national comparisons: the success of Islamist parties in relatively free and fair post-Arab spring elections offered the perfect model for invoking a 1990s horror scenario, making it all the easier to exploit rhetorically.

In adopting a “softer” approach of evoking nationalist and isolationist sentiment, the budget for the ministry of culture and for, *inter alia*, the ministry of *mujahidin* celebrating the 50th anniversary of Algeria’s independence in May 2012 was financed by a total of 560 million USD (Cazeaux 2013). The funding of cultural activities independent of the state through autonomous organizations has a share of only 0.2% of this sum (ibid.).

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<sup>243</sup> Personal interview with political scientist, October 2013, Algiers.

<sup>244</sup> Algeria only offered asylum to those members of Gaddafi’s family who had not held high military functions. Officially, it was granted for “humanitarian reasons”, as Gaddafi’s daughter Aisha reportedly gave birth the very day after entering Algerian territory. For the reconstruction of the decision-making process in the Algerian elite cf. El Watan, 30 May 2014.

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Besides music festivals, theater reenactments of the glorious history focusing on the role of state leaders were produced (ibid.). The slogan of the anniversary posters, “*ma zal waqifin*” (literally: still standing), however denounced any dynamic movement towards the future (Davis & Serres 2013: 104).

A different strategy was to portray the protest movement as a Kabyle particularity. The factual basis was that the RCD with its long-time leader Said Saadi was a vocal part of the CNCD (later CNCD-*partis*). The depiction of the demonstrations as being concerned with regionalist issues only put them in a long tradition of uprisings that the rest of Algerians did not care too much about (Le Quotidien d’Oran, 2 April 2011). The result that newspapers close to the *pouvoir* presented the protesters and indirectly all Kabylians as traitors to the Algerian nation was a side effect the elites seemed to accept in this context. Thugs not only denounced the RCD, but also called them “cross worshippers” as a derogatory term for Christians, who are more prevalent in Kabylia.<sup>245</sup> Two non-mainstream elements of national identity were thus lumped together to create distance to the “normal” Algerian way of life and to evoke antipathy against all protesters.

### Responses

Offering an alternative to state discourse on the revolutionary past, the protesters tried to create an equivalent counter-narrative in pointing out how the aged human rights activists who had fought in previous struggles, notably after 1988, now united with the youth, making the protest movement a cross-generational and therefore all-national cause (El Watan, 14 February 2011). However, some observers were rather disillusioned seeing the same activists’ faces in the protests instead of witnessing the birth of a truly new and younger movement.<sup>246</sup> Kabyle activists denounced the anti-Kabyle polemic in the official press through filming the burning of newspapers issues that carried this message.<sup>247</sup>

Regarding the historical narrative, the elites were lucky to have at least one argument that resonated with the citizens’ perception, although this probably resulted more from personal experiences than from the government’s smart framing. As a general tendency,

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<sup>245</sup> The exploitation of the Kabyle question is presented online at <http://amazigh.blog.lemonde.fr/2011/04/14/algerie-la-contestation-et-le-facteur-kabyle/> rev. 23.06.14.

<sup>246</sup> Personal interview with sociologist, October 2013, Algiers.

<sup>247</sup> Video footage of the burning is online at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E\\_3dNITfdgk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_3dNITfdgk) rev. 23.06.14. A different question is whether the depiction of protests as a regional and particularistic phenomenon could be countered through “Kabyle *shuhada*” chants in the same video clip.

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the framing which worked due to empirical credibility was not the reference to national pride over stability, but the insecure situation in neighboring countries and the population's tiredness and trauma resulting from the civil war.<sup>248</sup> The citizens' own memories and a look around in the region made them appreciate the stability that they at the same time recognized and resented as stagnation.<sup>249</sup>

*Table 5.2: Identity-Related Legitimation Strategies in Algeria – Nationalism*

Addressees	Legal mode	Symbolic mode	Policy mode	Success?
All citizens		Nationalist campaign Stability discourse Depicting protesters as “Kabylians” and Christians		Yes? (but sidelining Kabylians)
Pro-reform protesters		Accusation of disloyalty Reference to regional instability (towards young protesters) Reference to civil war (towards older protesters)		Yes (but partly negative)

### 5.3.3.2 Religion

The area of religion was not particularly affected by the Arab uprisings and it was only marginally considered in decision-making. Although the Algerian state tried to present itself as secular, Islam is the religion of the state and is promoted to offer a counter-ideology to radical groups.<sup>250</sup> Despite the disengagement of the MSP from the presidential alliance, politicians with Islamist alignment remained in the ruling elite, as especially the Islamist political parties proliferated.

Werenfels has hinted at the rising importance of Sufi orders in Algerian society, a phenomenon which is to some extent an “invented tradition” (2013: 7). The state aims at creating religious legitimacy through selectively allocating money to Sufi orders for maintaining the infrastructure of holy shrines, offering education and sponsoring cultural activities (ibid.). This policy does not only serve legitimation, but has been employed

<sup>248</sup> This was the overwhelming echo of all interview partners.

<sup>249</sup> Already in a comparison of data from the 2002 World Values Survey in Algeria, Tessler found that strong agreement to the statement “Democracy may have problems but it’s better than any other form of government” was only 48%, significantly under the rates of other Arab countries (2005: 199ff.).

<sup>250</sup> On religion politics in Algeria see the general discussion by Mattes (2007).

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in a divide-and-rule manner, “co-opting some to marginalise others” (ibid.: 8). Most importantly, Sufi orders are constituencies that engage in rent-seeking and clientelist networks, benefiting from state services in exchange for public support and the provision of voters (ibid.: 10). In this sense, they act as intermediary organizations. Their umbrella organizations have been headed by figures loyal to the president (ibid.: 8).

As relevant religious actors, there are both quietist and politicized Salafis, the latter forming one wing of the outlawed ex-FIS. As mainly the political strands of grass-roots Islamism and jihadism are repressed, “a curious marriage of convenience may exist between the leaders of Sufism and Wahhabism in Algeria” (Khemissi, Larémont & Taj Eddine 2012: 556).<sup>251</sup>

Legal-formal changes in the religious domain of identity-related legitimation were mainly introduced after the time span under consideration.

### **Symbolic mode**

In March 2012, the Algerian government signed a deal with the China State Construction Engineering Corporation for building the world’s largest mosque outside of Saudi Arabia. This building is thought to be intended as Bouteflika’s religious legacy. It will have the world’s highest minaret, surpassing 250 meters, despite being built in an earthquake zone, and costs for construction are estimated at approximately one billion Euros (Jeune Afrique, 22 August 2012). Its monumentality, rooming a capacity for 120,000 people, seems rather disproportionate for a mosque located in the Eastern suburb of Mohammadia, at some distance from the center of Algiers.<sup>252</sup> Most reports mention the dimensions in comparison to the grand mosque of Casablanca built by Hassan II in Morocco, which it seems to be mainly designed to surpass (El Watan, 30 August 2012). While the planning had been going on since the mid-2000 years, the contract was finally only signed during the relevant time span (Mattes 2007: 70).

### **Policy**

Many Sufi orders have become hesitant to play the game of lending legitimacy to politicians, which showed in the run-up to the parliamentary elections (El Watan, 29 April 2012). Instead, the state tried to strengthen its own control of religious life. In the first half of 2011, 200 new mosques were opened nation-wide. Moreover, the recruitment of

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<sup>251</sup> The term Wahhabism refers to the Saudi branding and sponsoring of Salafism.

<sup>252</sup> The grand mosque was also envisaged to be the center of a new hierarchization of mosques in Algeria introduced to better control them. Another measure of streamlining religious institutions was to set up a “pilot mosque” in every *wilaya* (Le Soir d’Algérie, 13 May 2013).

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new imams was set to be raised from 500 to 1000 annually (Algérie-Focus.com, 31 July 2011). This might be seen as building an organizational counterforce to prevent an overspill of the successes of Islamism in neighboring countries.

While the Kabyle regions had enjoyed a somewhat greater freedom of religion and even a number of conversions to Christianity were reported, the state was eager to tighten its control there. In May 2011 out of the blue the governor of Bejaïa ordered the closure of seven protestant churches (Ennahar Online, 25 May 2011). Other clear-cut strategies that were designed towards appeasing Salafis were not observable.

### Responses

A survey conducted in summer 2011 among Algerian youth intended to investigate whether the promotion of Sufism as a moderate version of Islam was successful (Khemissi, Larémont & Taj Eddine 2012). The percentage of respondents who indicate they never visit a *zawiya* (Sufi shrine and spiritual order) was slightly above 30%, which can be an indicator for either a secular or Salafi leaning, as Salafis regard this kind of popular religiosity including the veneration of saints as superstition (ibid.: 555). Although an overwhelming majority of Algerian youth identify themselves as Muslims (87% “strongly”, 12% “somewhat”; ibid.: 551), many are rather suspicious of mixing politics with religion.<sup>253</sup>

Algerians were little pleased at the outlook of spending a vast amount of money on a mosque construction project that is schemed to employ 10,000 imported Chinese workers instead of alleviating domestic unemployment (Jeune Afrique, 22 August 2012). Moreover, the maintenance costs later will signify a substantial and permanent reallocation of funds to the center. Many critically remarked that the building’s dimensions make it quite obvious that it serves prestige much more than necessity or sense (ibid.). An online petition against the construction was circulated soon, but did not reach a significant number of signatures (Algérie1.com, 28 August 2012).

It is unclear whether the goal of raising the imams’ numbers could be met and what effects it had. At any rate, the *wali* of Bejaïa met strong opposition from international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and churches protesting against the closure of the local congregations (La Dépêche de Kabylie, 24 October 2013). One month after his decision, he had to withdraw it (El Watan, 9 June 2011). The failure of

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<sup>253</sup> An ethnographic study on youth’s reception of national liberation narratives finds that the identification with Islam even surpasses the self-identification as Algerian (Vince 2013: 48).

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this strategy is therefore not measured on the side of the addressees, but results from the need to retract the decision.

*Table 5.3: Identity-Related Legitimation Strategies in Algeria – Religion*

Addressees	Legal mode	Symbolic mode	Policy mode	Success?
All citizens				
Religious population		Grand mosque of Algiers	More state imams	No?
Salafis			Closing churches	No

### 5.3.4. Material Legitimation

As already described, the rentierist allocation logic guides material legitimation strategies. Besides, the economy is dominated by “opaque alliances between entrepreneurs, political elites and army officers” (Boubekeur 2013: 470). Despite Algeria’s oil wealth, the economic situation was rather dim at the beginning of the uprisings, mainly due to a lack of productive industries, unemployment, rising prices and demographic factors. Although the absolute numbers of employment have slightly risen, they cannot satisfy the youth bulge. In consequence, working conditions tend to be precarious and jobs do not profit youth with higher education. Not even half of the people who were employed by 2010 had permanent positions (Dris-Aït Hamadouche & Dris 2012). Still, 15% of the GDP was spent on public sector salaries (IMF 2012a: 19). Another important channel of allocation, the distribution of housing lagged behind expectations and announcements. In the six years between 2004 and 2010, only 62,000 housing units in the *wilaya* of Algiers were allocated to entitled families (Dris-Aït Hamadouche & Dris 2012).

Fortunately for the Algerian elites, the oil price rose massively in 2011 after the worldwide economic crisis had eased, leading to an increase in export revenues of 27% (IMF 2013: 5). The upward trend of the oil price, which remained above 90 USD during the complete relevant time span, was more than welcome, as these windfall profits were swiftly used to pacify the population. The government made massive use of the oil stabilization fund for covering the budget deficit caused by extra expenses (IMF 2014a: 35). While the financial law for 2010 foresaw state spending of 2,800 billion DA, until

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the complementary financial law for 2012 which was announced in February of that year spending had skyrocketed to 4,900 billion DA (cf. the respective laws).

### **Legal-formal mode**

One legal measure in reaction to the “sugar and oil riots” was in fact a non-implementation of a law. The decree stipulating that sums exceeding 500,000 DA should be paid per check or other formal bank transfers was quietly abandoned instead of entering into force on April 1, 2011 (La Tribune, 9 April 2011). This benefited the business actors of the informal sector known as the “mafia”.

### **Symbolic mode**

One of the rhetorical strategies to counter political demands was to classify the uprisings in other Arab countries as “riots” in order to suggest purely socio-economic reasons for protest (Dris 2013). This was a deliberate move to avoid any political implications and to retain the monopoly over the politicized term “revolution” – which was already taken for a different historical purpose in Algeria.

Public investment programs and legitimate socio-economic grievances were the first issues president Bouteflika addressed in his reform speech on April 15, 2011. He stressed the five-year plan (2009-2014) that stipulated the building of two million housing units – of which only a negligible part had actually been constructed. After praising the subsidies on basic foodstuff, Bouteflika presented the microcredit programs as a viable way for reducing unemployment and poverty. When talking about fighting corruption, he even spoke of “fighting bureaucracy” (sic!) and invoked a favorable business and investment climate, higher productivity, competitiveness, and economic growth as ultimate goals. On the rhetorical level, this speech presented a mixed bag of measures aimed at pleasing everybody without displaying any coherent strategy. In this sense it neatly mirrors the contradictory policies that were enacted.

### **Policy**

State allocation continued to be the heart of material legitimation in Algeria. In the 2012 budget it stood at 15 billion Euros (Dris-Aït Hamadouche & Dris 2012). Public spending in 2011 increased by 47% to arrive at an astounding 181% in 2012 in comparison to 2010 spending (IMF 2014a: 35). This led to a “budget deficit of almost 34 percent of GDP” (Zoubir & Aghrout 2012: 70). According to Achy (2013: 13), the distribution of the oil rent during the years 2009-2012 on average included housing (10%), support to farmers (10%), food subsidies (6%), fuel subsidies (20%), civil servant wages (37%),



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pensions to war veterans (5%), and other social transfers (12%). But what is interesting is in which domains spending was actually increased.

Already on January 8, 2011, the government decided to return to the massive subsidies on cooking oil and sugar, the lifting of which had led to the initial riots (Zoubir & Aghrout 2012: 68). This turned out to be an expensive measure, as most basic foodstuff has to be imported, and between 2010 and 2011 the imports rose by 67% (IMF 2012a: 4). Given the high prices on the world market, this forebodes a future burden for the treasury. At the same time, food supply does not really work well.<sup>254</sup> Regarding further subsidies, the total bill is estimated between 2.5 and 3 billion USD annually, from which not only needy consumers, but also the food industries profit (Dris-Aït Hamadouche & Dris 2012). Moreover, fuel is heavily subsidized both directly and indirectly as it is sold well below world market prices. Despite a steady rise in local consumption, the price for a liter of gas stood at about 20 DA per liter in 2013 (about 0.20 Euros).<sup>255</sup> The expenses for fuel and gas made up almost 12% of GDP (IMF 2013: 40). Also electricity is sold under market prices, as since 2005 the prices have been left untouched (El Watan, 10 August 2012).

The most important measure countering protests were retroactive **salary raises** for government employees and security personnel, i.e. police forces and members of the military. Police officers benefited from an increase of their wages in crucial times, which ensured their loyalty. Already in December 2010, their wages had been raised “by 50 percent and would include a three-year back-pay deal” (Volpi 2013: 111). Although this decision was made before the onset of the protests, it became effective in the 2011 budget. Also the salaries of army personnel were raised by 40% in December 2011 (ibid.). Taking into account the back payments, 2011 expenditures for public sector personnel rose by 45% in comparison to 2010 and soared to 165% in 2012, totaling 1,980 billion DA or 12.5% of GDP (IMF 2014a: 34). The funds for the *mujahidin*’s pensions were also raised from 151 billion DA in 2010 to 163 billion DA in 2011 and 185 billion DA in 2012 (ibid.).

One of the most common forms of protest was the strikes organized by various professional groups and unions. In March 2011 only, Volpi counts “at least seventy strikes

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<sup>254</sup> During the time of Islamic holidays I spent in Algeria in 2013, there were even temporary food shortages, especially as regards meat.

<sup>255</sup> According to a GIZ study, fuel is cheaper in only seven countries in the world (Algérie1.com, 26 October 2013).

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throughout the country [...] from teachers to rail workers and doctors to court clerks” (2013: 110). What is remarkable is that these professional groups are largely employed in the public sector. Inter alia, employees of the state-owned Sonelgaz enjoyed a 40% salary raise in 2011 (Le Quotidien d’Oran, 17 May 2011).

As already mentioned, one group was dissatisfied with the back payments for military and security personnel: the communal guards. Although their statutes prohibit strikes and the like, they staged a major demonstration in Algiers, after which they were also promised a pay raise (Ennahar, 7 April 2011). Besides financial betterment, the communal guards sought symbolic appreciation of their work, such as awards for bravery. However, the Minister of Interior was quick to threaten them with exclusion from the corps (Le Quotidien d’Oran, 5 April 2011). Also employees in the judicial branch went on strike in April 2012, but when the court clerks started to protest, their salaries and other benefits were frozen (HRW 2013).

In a move that on the outside appeared as a measure of pluralization, more unions had been allowed to form. Even relatively autonomous organizations of workers in various branches had been established in the 2000s. This was a move away from the unitary mass organization UGTA that had dominated societal life for decades. However, the freedom to create new associations led to a fragmentation of the field, or in the words of a human rights activist, an atomization.<sup>256</sup> E.g., in the branch of teachers, eight different syndicates exist today. Instead of fighting together for improvements, the newly created associations compete against each other as well as with the statist organizations.<sup>257</sup> Self-organization, the fight for better working conditions and for maintaining the organizations’ legal statuses consume all of the activists’ energy. Their precarious position of acting within tight boundaries preempts political demands, even though many of their recurrent problems have political issues and decisions at their core.

Besides paying higher wages, public authorities announced the creation of new **jobs** (Le Quotidien d’Oran, 14 February 2011). Already the five-year public investment plan from 2010-2014 foresaw the creation of three million jobs (Zoubir & Aghrout 2012: 68).

The building of two million **housing** units was planned under the five-year plan 2010-2014, of which only 83 000 were actually constructed annually between 2010 and 2012

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<sup>256</sup> Personal interview with human rights activist, October 2013, Algiers.

<sup>257</sup> Personal interview with syndicate official, October 2013, Algiers.

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(Liberté, 9 February 2013). In theory, the state planned to accomplish three times as much. In the complementary financial law from June 2011, the expense for authorized programs to support access to living space skyrocketed to almost 1,300 million DA from just below 400 million DA in the original law dating from December 2010.

One central instrument for allocation aiming at pacifying the unemployed youth was the increase in funds for the program **ANSEJ**, which is the acronym for “*agence nationale de soutien de l’emploi des jeunes*”. This scheme provides unemployed youth between the age of 19 and 35 with bank credits and loans at little or even zero interest rates to start their own micro-businesses. The youth’s capital contribution is at a symbolic 1% or 2% of the granted sum, while state-owned banks and the agency cover the rest of the loan, with 70% of the load weighing on the banks (Algérie-Focus.com, 14 October 2013). The ANSEJ program had already been established in 1997, but upon a decision on 22 February 2011 was massively expanded to finance some 42,000 projects and generate 93,000 employments in 2011 (Dris-Aït Hamadouche 2012b: 63). As of 2012, it even supported 65,812 projects (Algerienews.info, 17 April 2013).<sup>258</sup> In the agricultural domain alone, the number of approved projects rose from 10,000 in 2011 to over 12,000 in 2012, at a cost of some 200 million Euros (La Nouvelle République, 24 December 2012). Another loan scheme provided for by the state’s unemployment insurance financed more than half of this number, so that together in 2012 over 100,000 projects were supported (Algérie-Focus.com, 14 October 2013). The director of this agency admitted that the banks were urged to approve of requests, which led to a jump in approval rates from about 30% in 2008 to an almost universal acceptance of 96% five years later (ibid.). The total cost of grant schemes in the state budget, including schemes for all ages, rose from 609 billion DA in 2010 to 989 billion DA in 2011 and then 1053 billion DA in 2012 (IMF 2014: 35).

The director of the ANSEJ today is prime minister Abdelmalek Sellal, which hints at the political importance of this program. However, the ANSEJ framework is not even meant to achieve sustainable results. It is rather a one-way street to distribute oil rents: the loans are paid back to a very limited extent only. Within a very short period of time upon creation, a large share of the start up businesses faces bankruptcy. One telling newspaper report quoted Sellal boasting that more than 70% of the youth that received

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<sup>258</sup> The allocation of funds to the ministry for work, employment and social security more than tripled from 70 billion DA in 2010 to 249 billion DA in the complementary financial law of 2012.

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credits pay the money back (Algérie-Focus, 13 November 2013). Departing from the official confession that about one third of beneficiaries get away with their money, it can safely be guessed that the real number is much higher.<sup>259</sup> It is an open secret that the credits are usually spent on cars and apartments rather than on the creation of more employment.

But there is even more to it. An article in the prestigious independent newspaper *El Watan* which was published on 10 June 2011 claimed that a large share of the money is embezzled by the “mafia” of the informal sector. Inside the ANSEJ agencies, mediators approach the applicants and offer them their services to take care of the formalities. The youth are happy to receive their money without having the slightest idea what their fake businesses are used for. In return, the mediators take 10% of the loan sum and take over the commercial register, enabling their bosses to launder money, make anonymous investments, and conceal dubious imports and illegal foreign exchange dealings. In many cases, the ANSEJ agency staff has knowledge of these procedures. Sometimes also the youth profit from further illegal enrichment.<sup>260</sup> In another case, children of high functionaries in Oran opened car rental services, which was a possibility to maximize profits (*El Watan*, 10 June 2011). The ANSEJ scheme thus serves to buy social peace through pacifying primarily those who do not want to work, while in the meantime young people who work in one or even two jobs are considerably worse off economically.<sup>261</sup> At the same time, this again indirectly benefits another hidden addressee: the informal mafia.

After the youth had been satisfied, also the retirees’ minimum **pensions** were raised from January 2012 onwards to attain 15,000 DA per month. Also other pensions experienced a raise, even the high ones, although the percentage was less significant for pensions above 40,000 DA (Dris-Aït Hamadouche & Dris 2012, Fn 13). The final amount equals an annual burden for the state budget of about 630 million Euros (Dris-Aït Hamadouche 2012b: 62).

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<sup>259</sup> An anti-corruption activist estimated that 90% of the credits will not be paid back. Personal interview, November 2013, Algiers.

<sup>260</sup> In one of the examples reported in *El Watan*, youth in Boumerdès bought machinery which they use in assisting the theft of sand used in the construction industry (ibid.).

<sup>261</sup> Personal interview with young journalist, October 2013, Algiers.

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### Responses

One observer of the Algerian protests judged that “[t]his is partly a revolt of raised expectations” (The Guardian, 17 February 2011). The subsidies on sugar and oil did not impress the political opposition at all. Veteran human rights activist Ali Yahia Abdennour was quoted as saying: “if *le pouvoir* thinks it can silence the youth by lowering the food prices, it is wrong [...]. They will protest until he leaves!” (Le Quotidien d’Oran, 27 February 2011; author’s translation) The leader of the socialist party, Louisa Hanoune, called for reversing the privatization of former state enterprises producing foodstuff to provide for food security and employment (Le Quotidien d’Oran, 6 February 2011).

The cycle of protesting and concessions led to inflation and a loss of value for the Algerian Dinar. Already in October 2011, food prices rose again, leading to an overall inflation rate in 2011 of 5.5% (IMF 2012a: 4). In 2012, inflation soared to “a 15-year high” of 8.9% (IMF 2013: 4). While this development resulted in a zero-sum game for employees, persons without income suffer all the more from the price hikes, thus exacerbating inequality.

In another domain, the low prices pose a major problem. The electricity price is extremely low, encouraging high and increasing consumption which the existing ageing infrastructure cannot manage any longer. In consequence, power outages have become a common phenomenon throughout the country, in turn provoking more popular protests (El Watan, 10 August 2012).

It is hard to measure the effects of employment policies. One reason for this is the very revealing lack of detailed numbers for 2011 as opposed to 2010 regarding the age patterns of unemployment and labor force participation.<sup>262</sup> Due to the demographic distribution with 45.8% of the population younger than 25 years, at least two million jobs would be needed annually to provide employment for the youth bulge – which is already a lot more than the five-year plan foresees (CIA World Factbook 2014b).

While the ANSEJ scheme is a temporary good deal for those who profit from the loans, the injustice inherent in the program is felt by both the elder generations and those peers who work hard.<sup>263</sup> The way in which the program is implemented nurtures the suspicion that it is not primarily designed to encourage entrepreneurship, but rather to sedate po-

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<sup>262</sup> ILOSTAT Database, online: [www.ilo.org/ilostat](http://www.ilo.org/ilostat) rev. 02.05.14.

<sup>263</sup> Numerous personal interviews, October and November 2013, Algiers.

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tentially riotous youth and to provide an easy way of allocation for those who want to profit from the oil wealth.<sup>264</sup> Psychologically, it encourages parasitic behavior instead of pursuing its proclaimed aim. But even this measure is temporary and unsustainable as it can only be financed through continued rent income.

Interestingly, the latest wave of the Arab Barometer shows a doubling in the share of respondents who say that “the current economic situation” in Algeria is good, up from 32% in 2011 to 66% in 2013 (Robbins 2014: 2).<sup>265</sup> Notably, the question does not refer to the respondents’ personal economic situation, which might actually have improved in the time between the data collection waves due to the success of material legitimization strategies. At the same time, however, the overwhelming majority of 77% indicated the greatest challenge that Algeria faces in the future is the economic situation (ibid.: 3). So these rather ambiguous answers could be interpreted as a successful short-term stabilization to the benefit of some – with all actors involved knowing that it is merely temporary.

*Table 5.4: Material Legitimation Strategies in Algeria*

Addressees	Legal mode	Symbolic mode	Policy mode	Success?
All citizens		Protests only socioeconomic Housing	Subsidies on basic foodstuff Pensions raises	Yes?
Public sector employees			Salary raises	Yes
Unemployed youth			ANSEJ	Yes
Informal mafia	No law on check payment			Yes?

<sup>264</sup> One young man told me his request for a loan for a start-up company was dismissed by a bank although he had an actual business plan. As the business idea sounded interesting, one might guess that he did not belong to the envisaged target group. Personal communication, November 2013, Algiers.

<sup>265</sup> However, there might be interview effects as this question on the economy is the first substantial question in the survey questionnaire, cf. page 9 of the Codebook Arab Democracy Barometer Wave II, 2010-2011, online: <http://www.arabbarometer.org/instruments-and-data-files> rev. 26.05.14.

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### 5.3.5. Personal Legitimation

The president's vast powers are enshrined in article 77 to 79 of the Algerian constitution. In advance of the 2009 elections, article 74 of the constitution was changed to allow for unlimited re-election and Bouteflika's third presidential term. In these elections, the president even ran for reelection as an independent candidate despite being the FLN's honorary president. Amel Boubekour ascribes this "unprecedented event in Algeria" to Bouteflika's "successful connections to business operators" (2013: 476f.), which offered him enough support to neglect the ruling party. This move can be interpreted as an attempt to mimic the style of other Arab presidents whose rule is neopatrimonial and who like to stay in power for life, if possible (Aghrout & Zoubir 2009).

During the Arab uprisings, protesters called for the president to step down, as he belongs to the gerontocratic rulers out of touch with the younger generations. But they were also aware that he is only the visible face of formal power so that removing him would not improve much, as long as *le pouvoir* is known to be the obstacle to political change (Jabi 2012: 26).

#### Legal mode

In the legal mode, no changes in competences were noticeable in the relevant time span, as the presidential elections for Bouteflika's fourth term were only held in 2014. No constitutional changes at all were engendered in the immediate management of the uprisings. Even the much-discussed post of a vice presidency was not created, which can be interpreted as the elites' wish to control a possible succession crisis through ad-hoc management rather than be stuck with a vice president.

#### Symbolic mode

In his speeches, Bouteflika focused on his achievement of having initiated the national reconciliation and restored peace. Other than that, he mainly refrained from personal references and instead put weight on his constitutional role (Bouteflika 2011). A paternalistic style was nevertheless discernible, when he talked about "*permitting* the citizens to contribute to a greater extent to the decisions of which their and their children's futures depend" (ibid., italics are mine).

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### Policy

Elite management in Algeria is a tenuous affair, not least due to the diversity of the population and shifts in recruitment patterns over the past decades.<sup>266</sup> Most important is the co-optation and promotion of members hailing from the same clan, as these form the real power base of individuals given the informal nature of politics. The government proper's standing is not too decisive, as no minister reaches beyond the second circle of elites (Werenfels 2007: 63ff.). Nevertheless, reshuffles of ministers were rather frequent in Bouteflika's first terms. This changed in 2011. While usually a new government was formed on a regular annual basis, the ninth government presided over by prime minister Ouyahia remained firmly in place from May 2010 until September 2012, being the longest serving Algerian government since 1988. This can be interpreted as a signal during the Arab uprisings that despite the fluid political situations in other countries, the Algerian elite displayed demonstrative stability, almost immovability.

Instead of crisis management, a formal procedure of reshuffling personnel was used. The parliamentary elections with the weakening of the RND enabled Bouteflika to get rid of his prime minister Ouyahia, who was the general secretary of the second regime party and was said to have a tense relationship with the president. The new appointee Sellal was a close confidant of Bouteflika and had been involved in the presidential campaigns in the 2000s.

### Responses

In fact, the president enjoyed some popularity for having ended the period of terrorism. This showed especially later in April 2013 when he fell seriously ill after a stroke, and it still took considerable time before opposition formed against his candidature for a fourth presidential term.<sup>267</sup>

Most of my interview partners voiced the opinion that the political situation has arrived at a dead end and remains stuck as long as the question of succession is not resolved. From a different perspective, this argument might be just as well be used by regime elites to avoid any change. It seems as if elites not belonging to the core elite had to accept the immovability of the political institutions as well. They did not try to chal-

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<sup>266</sup> For a comprehensive study of the Algerian elite from the mid-1990s until 2004 see Werenfels (2007).

<sup>267</sup> The presidential elections took place in April 2014. Protests against Bouteflika were organized by the CNCD-*Barakat* faction and faced repression, as usual (Algérie-Focus.com, 16 April 2014).



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lenge the ageing president, as the appearance of a more legalistic than a hands-on handling of the situation did not leave them any choice but to wait.

*Table 5.5: Personal Legitimation Strategies in Algeria*

Addressees	Legal mode	Symbolic mode	Policy mode	Success?
All citizens		Bouteflika as stabilizer	Avoidance of government changes	?
Regime elites				Yes

### 5.3.6. Preliminary Conclusion: Success or Failure of Legitimation Strategies?

Assessing the Algerian approach towards the uprisings, Volpi briefly states that the ruling elite “hardly deviated from its habitual methods of authoritarian governance” (2013: 104). In this sense, the lack of a protracted challenge on the societal side mirrors the lack of a longer-term time frame on the side of political elites. Davis and Serres put it this way: “The temporality of contestation in Algeria, which is seen in riots, road blockages, protests and self-immolations, can also be seen as a way of challenging the temporality of survival and stability staged by the regime” (2013: 104). The wait-and-see approach the government took has its manifestations in different strategies that have been discussed. In domains other than the structural type of legitimation, the dominant pattern of the legal mode was the non-enactment of laws or inaction when initiatives might have been expected.

Regarding the structural type of legitimation strategies, despite a multitude of political reforms that display activism, a truly legitimating character is hardly discernible as most measures were rejected by protesters and at least part of the opposition. Besides, through built-in clauses all measures tended to open the door for justifying repression at a later point. The other remarkable package of strategies was material legitimation, the domain in which Algeria boasts considerable advantages for the time being. The massive injection of funds into a variety of fields seems to have calmed down things. The predominant message that was transmitted in the other domains focused on stability and almost amounted to immobility. This refers to the nationalist identity-related and personal strategies, which were employed to a lesser extent, while tradition was not used at

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all. Moreover, in the nationalist subtype of identity-related legitimization, successful strategies were those that had negative connotations.

Most strategies that the Algerian ruling elite employed in responding to the challenge of the Arab uprisings are characterized by the blatant attempt to reassert power and discredit challengers. Those challengers who could not be bought faced repression.

### 5.4. REPRESSION IN ALGERIA

As described in the previous subchapters, the capacity and salaries of the security apparatus were boosted before and during the uprisings. Both in numbers and in tactics was the effectiveness of the security forces in 2011 estimated as being “far superior to that of October 1988”, shifting from exerting lethal and indiscriminate violence against protesters to containing and preventing mobilization in the first place (Volpi 2013: 111). Besides employing brute force, the “deployment of 30,000 police officers to quell the CNCD demonstration on February 12, 2011, was a very large *show of force*” (Zoubir & Aghrout 2012: 70; italics are mine). At the same time, this threat of force did not go unnoticed by the rest of citizens who learned what could happen if they were to challenge the regime.<sup>268</sup>

#### 5.4.1. Constraining Repression

As the analysis of legal changes in section 5.3.1 above has already made clear, the general level of constraining repression was raised in late 2011 in reversion of the more open space during the beginning of the protests.

Despite the formal abolishment of the emergency law, one of the 2001 orders to counter the Black Spring of the Kabyle uprising which prohibits protests in Algiers remained in place and was used as the legal basis to deter and disperse demonstrations. Moreover, any street protest was regarded as an “*attroupement non armé*” which is prohibited according to article 97 of the penal code if it “can disturb public tranquility”.<sup>269</sup> Article 100 even solicits a prison term for advertising such a demonstration.

When trying to disperse the protests, the police used force, employing water cannons and batons. However, in the early phase they refrained from a disproportionate choice

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<sup>268</sup> Interview with journalist, Algiers, October 2013.

<sup>269</sup> It is almost impossible to find an adequate translation, as the connotation is less that of an unarmed gathering than of a mob.

## 5. EMPIRICAL STUDY II: ALGERIA

of means that would lead to a public outcry, such as shooting into crowds. Their strategy was on the one hand to intimidate potential protesters. On the other hand, it was to act in a preemptive rather than suppressive manner, precluding the mobilizing dynamics of mass protests: “Their tactic of dividing protesters into small groups also prevented any sense of power that would come from mass mobilization” (Achy 2013: 12).

Confronted with more violent riots in March 2011, when illegal settlements were destroyed by bulldozers and met the resistance of rock throwing inhabitants, riot police used also tear gas and fired rubber bullets to disperse the protesters (Wall Street Journal, 24 March 2011).

The security apparatus sought to be recognized as legitimately using force. From December 2010 on, police units consisting of female officers were deployed to prevent women from protesting, first of all the mothers of those who forcefully disappeared during the civil war (Le Quotidien d’Oran, 24 February 2011). This feature tries to avoid delegitimation of repressive measures on the basis of cultural norms. In a different vein, anti-riot police staged a bizarre public relations event in which they opened their gates to journalists in February 2011 soon after the demonstrations, stressing their task of “protecting citizens” and trying to improve their image (Le Quotidien d’Oran, 24 February 2011).

Regarding the targets of repression, in a demonstration on 26 February, journalists were singled out as the target. They were beaten with batons by a disproportionally large police force (Le Quotidien d’Oran, 27 February 2011). Besides, thugs also attacked pro-reform protesters.

It was not solely at protests that journalists were targeted. After having unveiled the criminal network behind the flows of money from the ANSEJ program, unknown individuals wearing civilian clothes started to follow the El Watan journalist Zouheir Aït Mouhoub, later trying to assault him. When investigating another story, members of the security services tried to threaten and intimidate Aït Mouhoub. In a third event, four police officers in civilian clothes kicked him on the main street of Algiers and waited in front of his apartment in the night. When the journalist tried to have them identified at the local police station, it turned out they belonged to a parallel police of the Ministry of Interior outside the official structures (El Watan, 15 August 2012).

More legalistic forms of preventing freedom of expression were employed in the context of managing associational life, as described above. Refusal of authorization, travel

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bans and denial of public locations for holding meetings and conferences, especially as regards political education, are common measures of impeding autonomous organization.<sup>270</sup> Furthermore, sanctions targeted professionals who were active in unions or took part in strikes. Some court clerks who had gone on strike in April 2012 were fired, others were transferred to remote courts as a disciplinary measure, and one of the strike leaders was bullied (HRW 2013). Interestingly, while the court clerks on strike were not arrested, a CNDDC member who had filmed the strike was found guilty of inciting an “unarmed gathering” and “interfering with the work of an institution”, although his one year prison term was suspended (ibid.). Probably the authorities tried to suppress any form of cross-sector cooperation, in this case between the movement of the unemployed and a union.

Another story that Aït Mouhoub had investigated was a highly sophisticated form of defaming political protest. A dubious anonymous call for an uprising on 17 September 2011 was launched on Facebook which had the appearance of being instigated by a “foreign conspiracy” (El Watan, 23 September 2011). The Minister of Interior reacted by blaming the call on *pied noir* philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy, who had supported the intervention in Libya, although he had never said a word about the situation in Algeria.<sup>271</sup> Internet activists were monitored and interrogated, which led the same minister to the statement in the newspaper Ennahar: “Were it people from the inside, we would have unmasked and arrested them, but the evidence directs us to foreign parties related to the Zionist entity” (ibid.).<sup>272</sup> Official news sources rejoiced at the in-existent turnout of the “revolt” and celebrated the would-be victory over alleged plotters from abroad who could not destroy Algeria through calling for a revolution (Algérie1.com, 17 September 2011).

The anonymous sources of the El Watan article claimed that the orders had come from circles close to the president and not even the DRS had knowledge of the plot (ibid.).<sup>273</sup> While the story cannot be verified independently, the fact that the journalist’s harassers

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<sup>270</sup> Personal interviews with members of societal organizations, October and November 2013, Algiers.

<sup>271</sup> Dernières Nouvelles d’Algérie, 15 September 2011, currently only accessible online at <http://www.algerie360.com/algerie/ould-kablia-et-le-17-septembre-la-main-virtuelle-de-l%E2%80%99etranger-teleguidee-par-le-sioniste-bhl/> rev. 04.06.14.

<sup>272</sup> The “Zionist” involvement was deduced from the date which marks the anniversary of the signing of the Camp David peace accords and the massacres of Sabra and Shatila (ibid.).

<sup>273</sup> Ironically, a foreign consultant was instrumental in designing the scheme, if the source is to be trusted. The promotional link to this event appeared in such a pervasive manner that even the regional Facebook office could only account for it through programming by technical staff in the US headquarters (ibid.).

## 5. EMPIRICAL STUDY II: ALGERIA

wanted to know about the sources instead of accusing him of spreading lies speaks for itself. Journalists were quite annoyed that the act of demonstrating was criminalized and tainted in such a perfidious way, while mass surveillance was described as normalized defense against phony conspiracy theories (*Dernières Nouvelles d'Algérie*, 15 September 2011).

Finally, to impede the freedom of information, a permanent blocking of the internet as had taken place on 11 February 2011 was probably regarded as too harsh a measure to be used in a continuous way. Instead, steering political discussions online was attempted through assaults by hackers and fake internet accounts attacking al-Jazeera's websites and flooding them with abusive comments (*El Watan*, 23 September 2011).

### 5.4.2. Incapacitating Repression

An important element that prevented mass mobilization was the low number of casualties, as five protesters were killed in the January riots and no casualties were reported from the February demonstrations. Obviously, the police was cautious not to create "martyrs" that would serve as symbols of oppression and trigger more protests, leading to a spiral of escalation.

Rather than employing lethal force, temporary arrestment served to incapacitate protesters, especially known activists. These short-time detainments are probably the most cost-effective way of incapacitation, as they tend to remain under the radar of international attention, while ensuring the desired result.<sup>274</sup> The targets were most often rank-and-file activists, but partly even leaders, such as Ali Benhadj, who was partly instrumentalized for deterring other protesters and discrediting demonstrations and at other times himself intimidated through arrestment. An activist of the CNCD in Mostaganem was held in police custody for 24 hours and subsequently faced a trial for distributing leaflets in the streets after having tried to organize a meeting (*El Watan*, 23 April 2011). In the run-up to the parliamentary elections, a blogger who had posted a video of himself burning his voter card and calling for a boycott was jailed and later sentenced to eight months' imprisonment (*Al-Akhbar English*, 27 June 2012). Likewise,

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<sup>274</sup> In his April 2011 speech, Bouteflika alleged there were no political prisoners or prisoners of conscience in Algeria. Of course, all those who are arrested face more specific charges. While reports of alleged terrorists who are indefinitely imprisoned abound, no numbers are available.

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a Salafi imam from Yemen who had issued a *fatwa* calling for boycotting the elections was imprisoned for six months and subsequently banned from Algeria (ibid.).

However, in April 2011 Ahmed Kerroumi, an activist of the CNCD branch in Oran was reported missing shortly after having met with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression (L'Expression, 30 September 2013). Kerroumi's body was found four days later, violently murdered in the local party headquarters of the *Mouvement démocratique social*. The mysterious way in which Kerroumi was killed was probably supposed to be smoothed over through the quick presentation of a suspect. A young man who asserted his innocence was detained and brutally tortured to induce a confession, which he did not make (Amnesty International 2013).

The low number of deaths at organized protests stands in stark contrast to the high number of self-immolations by individuals which gives the overall situation a much more lethal appearance, although in an indirect way.<sup>275</sup>

While for 2011 the Political Terror Scale gives a ranking of 3, in 2012 it eased to 2 (Gibney et al. 2014). A closer look at the measures taken does not allow for discerning such a difference at all, let alone an improvement.<sup>276</sup>

Table 5.6: Repression in Algeria

		Targeted persons/groups		
		Opposition leaders	Rank-and-file activists	Politically inactive population
<b>Form of repression</b>	Constraining	Islamists, union leaders	pro-reform protesters, journalists, CSOs, autonomous unions	
	Incapacitating	Islamists, pro-reform activists, Salafis	pro-reform activists, rioters	

<sup>275</sup> Other approaches would count this at least as structural violence, but the definition of repression adopted here focuses on the intentional decisions of elites.

<sup>276</sup> 2 is the rating even France got in 2012, while e.g. the USA and Saudi Arabia stood at 3. This shows once again that the validity of such a rough index approximates zero and a disaggregated approach is much more informative.

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### 5.5 CONCLUSION: SUCCESS AND FAILURE OF STRATEGIES OF POLITICAL RULE IN ALGERIA

Dris-Aït Hamadouche and Dris hypothesize that the Arab uprisings gave Algeria the possibility to impose reforms from above that helped “reinforce the resilience of the Algerian regime” (2012). This assessment might seem daring to outsiders, but after reviewing the single strategies this is exactly in line with this analysis. One of the reasons why this was possible is the low threat that the actual demonstrations posed. This again was a result of the timely and swift repression that prevented potentially disturbing dynamics of mobilization. Moreover, the tightening grip on civil liberties with decreasing margins of action and the defamation of protesters led to many former activists’ resignation and temporary disengagement.

In contrast, the beneficiaries of legitimization strategies were first and foremost the state apparatus itself, most prominently the security services. Besides, a more shadowy profiteer crystallized out of the non-enactment of laws and dubious credit schemes: the informal “mafia”, which is hard to grasp as an addressee. Lastly, the broader population, which many described as “traumatized” from the civil war, cherished the stability that they partly ascribed to Bouteflika in comparison to historical and neighboring cases.

Volpi insists that the leadership did not employ “the ‘correct’ combination of repression and cooptation to defuse a revolution, but merely that on this occasion what it did worked well enough” (2013: 108). If one was to employ counterfactual reasoning, however, it is possible to say that on the one hand potential mistakes were avoided, such as the escalation of violence on the side of security forces. On the other hand, the overall strategies seemingly attained their goal of maintaining stability. The lacking success of strategies that were directed to protesters was not consequential because the opposition never managed to build up a challenge that could be presented as a viable alternative to the regime in place. Seeing the Algerian street succumb to repression despite the favorable regional circumstances therefore indeed bore a strong signal for regime maintenance.

Nonetheless, the heart of Algeria’s stability mix is still material legitimization, which is dangerous in times of fading oil reserves. As the population and inflation rates adapt to the higher spending, problems will be reiterated on an even higher level. Therefore, already the medium-term outlook for stability is bleak.

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Table 5.7: Summary of All Measures in Algeria

	Legal mode	Symbolic mode	Policy mode	Success?
<b>All citizens</b>	Parliamentary elections Information law reform Associations law reform	Reform discourse Nationalist campaign Stability discourse Depicting protesters as “Kabylians” and Christians Protests only socioeconomic Bouteflika as stabilizer	Fighting corruption Pensions raises Subsidies on basic foodstuff Housing Avoidance of government changes	Partly
<b>Pro-reform protesters</b>	Lifting the state of emergency Electoral reform	Accusation of disloyalty Reference to regional instability (towards young protesters) Reference to civil war (towards older protesters)		No / Yes (but negative) <b>+ Repression</b>
<b>Formal opposition</b>	Electoral reform			Yes (FFS) / no (RCD) <b>+ Repression</b>
<b>Regime elites</b>	Bensalah commission Monitoring elections Political party law reform	Bouteflika as stabilizer	Avoidance of government changes	Yes / No (MSP)
<b>Informal mafia</b>	<i>No law on check payment</i>		<i>ANSEJ</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Religious population</b>		Grand mosque of Algiers	More state imams	No?
<b>Salafis</b>			Closing churches	No? <b>+ Repression</b>
<b>Public sector employees</b>			Salary raises	Yes
<b>Unemployed youth</b>			ANSEJ	Yes



## **6. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

### **6. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

This chapter compares the two case studies in detail, especially focusing on the working mechanisms of the strategies that were employed. This serves to depict the similarities and differences of strategies in both countries more explicitly. The aim is to trace possible causal mechanisms that help explain the common outcome of the Jordanian and Algerian crises. First, the respective points of departure will be delineated, i.e. the crises of legitimacy that the Arab uprisings represented to both countries. Afterwards, the use of strategies is compared according to the various types of legitimation and repression. The presentation of similarities on the level of single measures is followed by a discussion of differences, including possible reasons for this divergence. This allows for testing the working hypotheses that were presented in the conceptual part, where possible. Furthermore, from the inductive comparison new refined hypotheses are generated that can be tested in future research. The chapter concludes with a discussion of whether the crises of legitimacy could be solved.

#### **6.1. THE CRISIS OF LEGITIMACY POSED BY THE ARAB UPRISINGS**

As the case selection was based on different sources of legitimacy in a resource-rich republic and a resource-poor monarchy, it could be assumed that both the crises and the management strategies in Jordan and Algeria diverged to some extent. Furthermore, the success or failure of the same strategies is expected to be caused by different structural conditions. The crisis regarding the sources of legitimacy is only one part of the story. The other important question is why the challengers could not make use of this crisis to build such a threat to the regime as to permanently destabilize the existing power structures.

The core of the legitimacy crises in both cases was a combination of structural and material factors. In Jordan as well as Algeria, as in all countries in the Arab world, socio-economic demands were the spark for unrest that spread throughout the region from January 2011. In late January 2011, both countries witnessed a politicization of demands, which culminated in mid-February in the most important demonstration in Algiers and the largest demonstration in Amman. The dynamics within the oppositional movement were slower in Jordan than in Algeria, probably due to a less vibrant and

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differentiated societal sphere. Notably, the regional momentum had already been lost when the protest movement became serious in Jordan in the end of March, which happened after the GCC intervention in Bahrain, the first status-quo preserving constitutional referendum in Egypt and the beginning of the crackdown in Syria.<sup>277</sup> More importantly, the potentially influential cross-cutting opposition alliance in Jordan formed only in summer, while the Algerian CNCD had already split in February.

However, political protests remained limited in terms of mobilization. Especially in Algeria, “political unrest in February was far less significant in scope than the social unrest in January” (Volpi 2013: 109). Moreover, the March demonstration by the auxiliary security forces, the communal guards, drastically outnumbered pro-reform protesters.

As regards the demands, the scope of the challenge was similar in both countries. The grievances were formulated in a more abstract way than in those countries in which protests led to the ousting of a ruler. In Jordan, the calls for a constitutional monarchy or reform under the king’s leadership did not touch upon his function as head of the state. Only very marginally did protesters call for changing kings or even for a republic, but the common denominator of oppositional activity was meaningful reform under monarchical leadership. The crisis of legitimacy did not pertain to overtly questioning the traditional or personal domains, as these remained largely taboo or else were repressed. Instead, the division of labor put the prime minister under public attack, while preserving the king’s role for holding together the nation. In the protests, more diffuse structures, intelligence services, corruption, economic injustice and the lack of representativeness of institutions were the targets of discontent. In Algeria, the latter demands also prevailed. Besides an anti-Bouteflika sentiment, many slogans revolved around *le pouvoir*. The opaqueness of the Algerian power structures made it virtually pointless to call for the president’s ouster (Davis & Serres 2013: 107). In this sense, for different reasons protesters in neither country had the possibility to project their grievances unto a single responsible person, which in other Arab countries had made it easier to mobilize apolitical parts of the population.

In both countries, street protests nevertheless became more common after the end of decidedly political demonstrations, however most often with a socioeconomic impetus.

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<sup>277</sup> Marc Lynch refers to the week of 14-20 March 2011 as the “pivotal turning point” of the Arab uprisings (2012b: 131).

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Volpi states that even after February 2011, “‘normalcy’ in Algeria still included regular protests – clashes with police, road blockages, strikes, ransacking of buildings, and so on – but these were disparate episodes rather than part of a nationwide event” (Volpi 2013: 108). The number of sit-ins in Jordan jumped as well, but these incidents also remained largely disconnected, except for the fuel riots, in which professional groups displayed solidarity through strikes. In general, pro-reform protesters remained peaceful despite attacks by thugs and security forces. The protests that turned most violent were anomic riots of marginalized groups, such as squatters, or tribal clashes.

To conclude, while the crisis of legitimacy affected mainly structural and material aspects, the challengers largely stayed within the boundaries of the well-known red lines in Jordan and exerted some self-restraint as regards the means of contestation in Algeria. Most importantly, they could not mobilize in a sufficient way to put the regimes on the brink of collapse. The reasons for this will be considered when reviewing the hypotheses.

### 6.2. COMPARING THE USE OF STRATEGIES WITHIN THE SAME TYPES

This subchapter compares the use of strategies of political rule that were devised to counter the legitimacy crisis following the framework of types of legitimation and repression respectively. First, measures that were employed in both countries will be discussed and contrasted to find out about differences in the causal mechanisms that led to their success or failure. Second, the strategies that were unique to either of the cases are presented, along with hypotheses on why they were not employed in the other case. Depending on the multitude of measures, a further substructure in similarities vs. differences and conclusions, if necessary along the line of the modes, will be introduced.

#### 6.2.1. Structural Legitimation: Immediate Responses to Buy Time

##### *Similarities*

##### **Legal mode**

The common strategies in the legal mode that were used in both Jordan and Algeria included reform commissions, the makeover of demonstration, electoral and political party legislation, the attempt to stylize legislative elections as turning points and enhancing their credibility through a higher level of monitoring than before. The purpose and result in both cases were newly elected parliaments that continued the old power

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structures, policies and boosted patronage networks. Regarding the public sphere, incumbents in both states tried to narrow the heightened freedom of expression through legal modifications concerning the press, in Algeria also pertaining to associational life. The **lifting of the state of emergency** in Algeria and the amendment of the public gatherings law in Jordan were the first measure to take steam out of the protests. But as the ban on demonstrations in Algiers remained in place and anti-terror legislation continued to serve as the legal basis for arrestments and prohibition of public protests, the effect on activists was zero. It was basically to the outside of the countries that the change seemed noteworthy. Similarly, in Jordan the duty to obtain permission from the authorities for holding a protest was replaced by an obligation of notification only, something that Algerian NGOs also wished for.<sup>278</sup> However, the stipulation in the Jordanian law that any kind of gathering that discusses a matter of politics falls under the law, theoretically necessitating prior notification of the Ministry of Interior, rendered any event that fails to do so illegal. While these initial measures in both countries had in common that they represented a concession to protesters' demands, the choice fell on a matter that did not really hurt incumbent elites and that could easily be compensated for through alternative control mechanisms, so that the bottom line of the initial responses is a lack of liberalization.

**The establishment of reform commissions:** In Jordan, the creation of the National Dialogue Committee was initially greeted with more enthusiasm than the Bensalah commission in Algeria. This was the case despite the fact that Jordan has a history of committees that brought about few tangible results besides co-optation (Bank 2004) and that the NDC was convened by the government instead of the king. Both commissions were presided over by the respective Senate presidents, but invitations to participate were declined by the organized pro-reform opposition. While in Jordan at least the subcommittees did some serious work, the procedure in Algeria involved more endless hearings of propositions by current and former elites. In consequence, the Bensalah commission did not produce any coherent results, while the NDC's recommendations – which were cautious enough – were watered down by the Royal Constitutional Committee which took care of drafting the new legislation. In this sense, the NDC's futility was engineered in a more subtle way than this was the case in Algeria. Nevertheless, the

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<sup>278</sup> Personal interview with LADDH activist, October 2013, Algiers.

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limited mandates showed from the beginning that the purpose of both commissions was to buy time. This came at the cost of credibility, as at the latest after the work had been finished those who had boycotted found their decision to be justified.

**Reform of political parties laws:** The legislative changes in both Jordan and Algeria were very hesitant. The legal texts failed to set lower thresholds for political party creation from which societal forces could have profited. The proliferation of new parties in Algeria was therefore not a result of the revised law, but of a different approval policy by the Ministry of Interior. Its effects showed in the legislative elections of May 2012. From the incumbents' perspective, the new founding of political parties was highly successful in scattering the opposition, as the FLN could win the parliamentary elections with a marginal 17% of the vote – a masterpiece of electoral engineering and manipulation in Schedler's sense (2002). The existence of more parties could lend a more democratic image to the political scenery, although most of them were one-man-shows of old guard politicians who willingly played into the hands of regime elites – and belonged to them anyway. This was a common trait of the party development in both countries. The roadmap for reform in Jordan as declared by the king theoretically foresaw a stronger role for political parties; nevertheless the fragmentation resulting from the elections was even more extreme, with eighteen one-man-shows not gaining more than one mandate out of a total of twenty-seven list-based mandates. Of course, these different nuances are a legacy of the polities until 1987, when Algeria was a single-party state, while no parties were allowed in Jordan.

**Electoral law reform:** Although the electoral laws were changed in both Jordan and Algeria, there were few content-related similarities. What both cases had in common was an enlargement of parliament and a higher quota for women, allowing for about 30% female deputies in Algeria and 10% in Jordan. The higher number of seats made it possible to co-opt more individuals and to maintain and even expand existing spoils. Differently from Jordan, Algeria also lowered the age of eligibility for candidates. What was presented as a milestone in Jordan and at least a formal shift from the previously practiced SNTV was the two-vote system. However, the reluctant introduction with only twenty-seven out of 150 mandates allocated according to party lists demonstrated the lack of inclination to give up on tried and tested practices. In all, the new elections laws can hardly count as innovations, as despite all novelties the detailed regulations set the basis for more of the same. In this sense, they did not serve to make the respective

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national assembly more representative of the population, except probably for reducing the gender gap. The dissatisfaction of significant parts of both the population and the legal opposition manifest in high rates of abstention and boycotts shows that the reforms did not meet the demands of reform activists.

**Legislative elections:** Parliamentary elections as such are nothing spectacular even under conditions of authoritarianism. However, in a process of democratization, free and fair elections are a crucial and defining turning point that marks the end of previous practices and sets the path for further development (O'Donnell & Schmitter 1986: 57ff.). This was also the case in Egypt and Tunisia in the early phase of the transitions. Because elections are attributed great importance especially by external actors, being able to demonstrate that this element exists is an important tool for autocrats. This could be witnessed in the two cases under study, although multi-party elections were not a new phenomenon there. Elites in both countries had tried to counter the calls for boycott by the Jordanian IAF and the Algerian RCD along with protest movements to enhance the credibility of the ballots. The decision of the Algerian FFS's leadership to take part in the elections disgruntled many of its activists and adherents. The probably manipulated turnout numbers that included only the percentage of registered voters helped create the image of decently accepted elections that remained more or less in the scope of previous polls. In both cases, the extension of voting times was nothing new. Moreover, the institutions that were elected had very little influence on core decision-making.<sup>279</sup> While the enlarged parliaments offered a chance for a wider range of representatives, they basically served to rejuvenate the entrenched elites.

**Electoral Monitoring:** In both countries, efforts at monitoring the elections were stepped up to enhance their credibility. In Jordan, the respective commission had more far-reaching competences than its Algerian counterparts, and also the coverage by external observers varied accordingly. However, in neither case were irregularities prevented. Most drastically, the candidates that had been accused of buying votes were elected while under arrestment, without losing their mandates or any other consequence. The international community was nevertheless happy to nod the results through.

**Parliaments:** As a result of these measures, the parliaments that emerged out of the elections were largely what the leaderships had wished for. The Jordanian lower house,

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<sup>279</sup> This showed e.g. in the parliamentary commission on the sugar and oil shortage in Algeria, the hearing invitation of which was simply ignored by the invited food companies.

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which for the first time had the opportunity to participate in the designation of the prime minister, opted for the incumbent instead of presenting another candidate. Both parliaments included factions of regime-friendly elitist Islamist parties. In Jordan, the *Wasat* party with its surprising weight probably benefited from the IAF's boycott. In Algeria, the previously overrated MSP suffered the punishment for having withdrawn from the presidential alliance and was cut back to its actual size. In both cases, the overwhelming majority of deputies came from the regime strongholds and this to an unexpectedly high degree. So after a couple of legal twists, the pre-uprising elites were rearranged to assert the claim to rule in institutional terms.

**Press laws:** Both states tried to limit the margins of free expression. The revised press laws introduced small improvements, but at the same time imposed vaguely defined off-limits topics such as a nebulous “national interest” or “unity” that should not be harmed. Moreover, defamation as a punishable crime loomed large in the new laws. What was presented as enhancing “professionalism” in fact favors self-censoring professionals by introducing requirements for long lasting experience in the field of journalism, thereby restricting the possibility for a younger generation of amateurs who especially publish online, notably bloggers and local reporters. The news websites' blunt coverage of inconvenient stories without passing any seniors' censorship obviously posed a danger to the control of information. This can be interpreted as fear of the youth's potential for breaking with conventional red lines and forms of contestation.

### **Symbolic mode**

In the symbolic mode, the emphasis on a gradual approach to political reform, which is led from above, was the common tenor. This accompanied a delegitimation of street protesters who refused to take part in national “dialogue”.

In their rhetoric of controlled reform, the leaders of both countries stressed that they would initiate processes of political reform. This way, they tried to demonstrate the rightfulness of their positions as responsible and responsive rulers. At the same time, this was supposed to take steam out of the protest movements and even to delegitimize street protests as a means of politics. Both President Bouteflika and King Abdullah II warned against an escalation of protests that would lead to *fitna*, thus evoking a strong and even religiously connoted deterrent. They focused on the achieved stability which they tried to connote as positive and not to be taken for granted. As both the historical and regional experiences confirmed this argument, even protesters employed some self-

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restraint and echoed the calls for reform, although they actually meant meaningful reforms that would introduce different rules of the game. However, a blatant rift was noticeable regarding the interaction of the legal and the symbolic mode, as the legal changes signaled a continuation of the status quo and overtly contradicted the rhetoric.

### **Policy mode**

In the policy mode, the co-optation of Islamist parties failed, while the fight against corruption was stepped up on the surface, but followed the political logic of window dressing and sacrificing dispensable elites.

**Failed co-optation of Islamists:** To the rulers' regret, the Islamist movements refused being (Jordan) or remaining (Algeria) co-opted. In Jordan, the IAF was offered participation in government, in the NDC and in the legislative elections. After the IAF had played the role of the loyal opposition for years, it established itself as the main challenger during the uprisings and did not want to give up its new credible role to reward reforms it regarded as insufficient. In a slightly different vein, also the MSP saw its chance in the wake of the regional uprisings to distance itself from the Algerian government. The remainder of the governing coalition was not amused, and in the aftermath of the elections the already diminished MSP was more or less crushed, with important cadres using their mandates to found new parties of their own. The resistance to co-optation by established Islamic forces led to a flourishing of minor would-be religiously inspired political actors.

**Fighting corruption:** Both Jordan and Algeria tried to react to a risen awareness and public complaints about rampant corruption through showing an intensified fight against corruption. In both cases, the exposure of important elites to accusations of corruption troubled the rulers. However, in Algeria the accusations were part of the DRS' attacks on the president and the fight between different clans, while in Jordan the queen had become the target of the disgruntled former regime base. A more visible handling of corruption cases and show cases that mainly struck former elites were intended to prove the incumbents' seriousness. However, even high-profile cases followed a political logic, and no attempts at a thorough fight against a social practice that had gone out of control were visible. Notably independent news websites in Jordan and societal associations in Algeria trying to establish a popular backup for eradicating corruption were penalized. The governments' intention to pursue anti-corruption alone and failing to cooperate with societal forces reveals that it is a purely instrumental use of this strategy rather



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than profound willingness. This strategy is rather dangerous as it creates expectations that are not met, and it became ever more pervasive as one of the most used slogans during electoral campaigns. In the medium term, it can be expected to backfire.

### *Differences*

Some differences were observed in the legal mode. Most importantly, the Jordanian elite made use of a wider range of measures than the Algerian leadership.

**Firing prime minister:** Ironically enough, the first measure in Jordan, rotating the unpopular head of government out of office, was cited in the Algerian independent press as a good example of taking protesters and the legitimacy of their demands seriously (Le Soir d'Algérie, 3 February 2011). Despite this enthusiasm, the rotation of elites and especially prime ministers is part and parcel of ordinary Jordanian crisis management, which is made possible through the division of labor with the prime minister acting as scapegoat. In Algeria, the still ruling party is more entrenched and formal offices are more institutionalized.

**Constitutional reform** was also a measure that was unique to Jordan in the relevant time span, as it was deferred to a later point in Algeria. It included the establishment of the monitoring body for elections and a constitutional court without tangible benefits for citizens. From now on, relatively powerless political institutions can try to have the constitutionality of laws reviewed by a constitutional court although the constitution that serves as the legal reference has long lost the more liberal contents it had once had.

**Associational law reform:** While associational life in both Jordan and Algeria had attained a high level in terms of the proliferation of organizations, its standing seemed to be more positively accepted in Jordan. This is probably due to the royal initiatives in the latter case, allowing for a higher degree of controlled activism, as it is also a welcome source of external rent-seeking. The ideologically more pluralistic landscape in Algeria with many autonomous syndicates and human rights organizations has obviously become too unmanageable in size and scope. Granting approval only to few selected associations, if any, leaves the door wide open for arbitrary closures and arrestments in case any of the still operating, but in the meantime illegal organizations should become too much of a nuisance. The way this law was enacted in Algeria was an extremely strong signal of deliberalization, which would be a less desirable strategy in Jordan, as the latter country depends more on its international image of being “the good guys” in the Middle East, therefore setting more subtle constraints to associational freedoms.

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### *Conclusion*

Both Jordan and Algeria engaged in a multitude of strategies of structural legitimation, predominantly in the legal mode. The amount of similar strategies is striking, but many of those are part of the repertoire of engineering formal authoritarian institutions. Notwithstanding their actual contents, legal amendments were presented as proving the elites' commitment to reform, while at the same time gradualism and stability were stressed. In the policy mode, governments in both countries had to deal with the oppositional stance of the largest Islamist movement. However, one problem that was tangible refers to the contradictions between words and actions as regards the interaction of the symbolic with the other two modes. As regards the differences, the slight edge Jordan has over Algeria in terms of the numbers of strategies mirrors both the different regime structures and the wish to be perceived as engaging in broad reform also to outside actors.

### **6.2.2. Traditional Legitimation: The King's Advantage**

#### *Differences*

Effectively, strategies of traditional legitimation were only employed in Jordan. The Algerian leadership probably did not dare to openly prepare for a potential fraternal succession of the aging president in the context of region-wide discontent with dynasty-building. Moreover, the contradiction to the revolutionary state-building narrative might have seemed to stark.

While the crisis of legitimacy in Jordan did not touch upon monarchical rule, former allies were disappointed with the king's priorities over the past years. In the wake of the uprisings, the king tried to reach out to his neglected base to restore support, especially as the *Hirak* became active. To stress the hereditary element, the crown prince who also turned 18 in 2012 was present in the public more often, while the queen tended to be visible in charity roles. Also elements of traditional rule such as renewing the *wila'* and the *makrama* were used. Some of the tribally dominated areas profited financially from the rather technical municipality reform and the allocation of funds.

The traditional legitimacy is also backed up through constitutional regulations limiting the freedom of expression when it comes to criticizing the institution of the monarchy and/or the person of the king. As protesters had grown accustomed to more drastic forms and means of contestation in attacking the king and the monarchy, they were

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swiftly repressed, but partly pardoned by the king, who thereby had the chance to use another form of traditional legitimation.

### *Conclusion*

To conclude, while the abundance of royal competences and power were criticized by the proponents of a constitutional monarchy, the existence of royal rule was not put into question by the oppositional alliance. Abdullah II somewhat recovered the advantages of being a traditional leader although he had done his best to appear as a modern king before – and partly also in parallel. He made use of all three modes, albeit targeting rather the tribal structures as such than the *Hirak*. While Algerian protesters widely called on their president to leave, the Jordanian king still enjoys the advantage of sitting on the Hashemite throne.

### **6.2.3. Identity-related Legitimation: It's the Nation, Traitor!**

#### *Similarities (nationalist)*

In the symbolic mode of **nationalism-related** type of identity politics, in both countries the protest movements were villainized as being orchestrated by minorities, the Palestinians and Kabylis respectively. In order to counter the regional wave or contagious character of protests, in both cases the question of loyalty was raised. Protesting was devalued as unpatriotic behavior and surrendering the nation to “foreign influences”. In Algeria more efforts were made to display the protest movement as orchestrated from abroad. This rhetoric was employed despite the fact that protesters in both Jordan and Algeria never attacked the state or the nation, but only the current form of rule.

#### *Differences*

As regards differences, in Jordan even the elite suffered from the new sense of nationalism, as the possession of any other citizenship besides the Jordanian became illegal for high officials. Later, the rapprochement with Hamas could be read as a positive sign towards Palestinian Jordanians in the sense of considering the grievances of their compatriots in the occupied territories. The calculus might at the same time have been to set a trap for the IAF by encouraging transnational ties and then accusing the Islamists of unpatriotic behavior. At any rate, this attempt to appease or try the main domestic opposition did not work.

Generally speaking, the Jordanian leadership was more flexible in employing diverse strategies in all modes. This is probably due to the fuzziness of national identity, differ-

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ent aspects of which are referred to upon necessity. Leaving this difficult matter in a heterogeneous society unresolved helped overcome the current crisis, albeit through creating insecurity. In contrast, as the Algerian national narrative is founded on events that happened 50 years ago, there is less leeway to adapt this story and its consequences to today's situation. In the deterrent rhetoric, it was glued together with remembrance of the black decade of the 1990s, which was by far the stronger framing. Nevertheless, the constant reference to the past was lost on a young generation of protesters, which could only be pacified through reference to neighboring instability.

### *Similarities (religious)*

In the **religious** domain, despite fundamental structural differences both states tried to reclaim control over the interpretation of Islam through raising the number of imams to staff state mosques. In Algiers, also the contract for the construction of the monumental mosque was signed when it was already expected to be nothing more than a project of prestige and control rather than an expression of the elites' piety. Failed attempts to appease Salafis were also noticeable in both countries, with the closing of churches in Algeria and the cartoon crisis trial in Jordan, although both did not seem to be top-level politics. Again, the Jordanian government employed very ambiguous strategies towards the Salafi movement, instrumentalizing jihadists to taint the image of reform protesters and Islamists. After the Salafis had made use of their short time in the public, swift repression soothed the scared population.

Although religion was not a center of the legitimacy crisis during the uprisings, the different measures and their limited success show that it is a highly contested field.<sup>280</sup>

### *Conclusion*

To summarize the results of both subtypes of identity-related legitimation, in Jordan as well as Algeria incumbents tried to reassert their definition of what it means to be a "good citizen" of the respective nation. They did this by emphasizing the dual identity-relevant factors of a "national interest" and an accepted mainstream belief. While the legitimating aspect of these strategies is modest, it exposes minorities and dissenters to

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<sup>280</sup> While judging from the success of Islamic movements some might argue that also a crisis of religious legitimacy was present, two counterarguments are to be considered. First, in no Arab country were Islamists the initiators of the protesters. Rather, they jumped on the train after others had started and mobilized enough protesters so that the Islamists saw their own opportunity. Second, the demands that Islamic parties and movements voiced were predominantly about political reform, not the leaderships' perceived lack of religiosity or the like. Of course, this does not preclude that the Islamists were aware of the fact that they would benefit from any changes due to their social organizations.

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criticism of being disloyal. After having experienced more liberal periods, citizens must have perceived of these developments as setbacks.

### 6.2.4. Material Legitimation: Bread and Fuel

#### *Similarities*

In both Jordan and Algeria, material legitimation strategies in the years before the uprisings had been marked by fostering a growing business elite that profited from privatization in the wake of structural reforms. After the uprisings, only some of the most corrupt of the *nouveaux riches* were ousted from the elite if deemed necessary, while the structures and possibilities for enrichment were left untouched. As the protesters' socioeconomic grievances were regarded as legitimate by the leaderships in both countries, they initiated a new wave of mass allocation to make up for the lost "social contract". In contrast to political demands, which were only partially acknowledged on the levels of discourse, the material strategies were also realized in the policy mode, generating actual output rather than mere rhetoric. The political demands were easier to discard as they were voiced by only a comparatively small number of activists. By contrast, larger masses participated in the ubiquitous sit-ins and "micro-riots", which were harder to control – and in some instances left to themselves by security forces. As political demands had only followed socioeconomic ones in the emergence of protests, the rationale was to appease the most urgent needs and thus take the mass base and most pertinent reasons for discontent out of the potential collection of grievances. Moreover, giving in to demands through allocation is easier than tackling meaningful reforms, although it is a short-term policy that generates new desires that will become all the harder to fulfill.

Among the policies that were put in place in both cases were the reinstatement of subsidies, salary raises in the public sector, especially benefits for army members including military veterans, but also for a variety of other professional groups. In Algeria, the subsidies on sugar and cooking oil were the emergency response to the January 2011 riots.

**Salary raises:** The salary raises for police and army forces which came into effect in 2011 included even a sumptuous three-year back pay deal. Upon protests, also the communal guards were included to benefit. In Jordan, the pensions of military veterans were raised in part as a response to vocal criticism. Other professional groups protested for better working conditions. It was a common pattern that they staged sit-ins and after

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some time got some of their demands fulfilled. Besides material gratification, some established their own associations, such as the teachers in Jordan.

### *Differences*

#### **Symbolic mode**

In his speeches, Bouteflika presented a mixed bag of measures that did not testify to a coherent economic strategy, while Abdullah II put a markedly different focus in his post-uprising speeches, at least temporarily departing from his earlier neo-liberal modernization rhetoric.

#### **Policy mode**

**Organization of labor:** In Algeria, the pluralization of union life had already been a product of previous years. The difference is however that in Algeria, the state monopoly on labor organizations was abolished to give way to a fragmented landscape of more and less autonomous unions that hardly cooperate in their respective fields. In Jordan, only few groups of professionals had been allowed to unionize in the first place. When the teachers association formed as a strong and unified union, it quickly used its organizational power to support the fuel riots.

**Scope:** Other differences between the two countries affected mainly the scope of allocation. As Algeria disposes of large oil and gas reserves, it injected a greater amount of money into each single measure. Especially the heavy funding of unemployed youth through the ANSEJ and other credit schemes, on which over a billion USD was spent during the past years, is unique to Algeria. To put this number into perspective, in the admittedly tinier Jordan this sum amounts to one tenth of the whole state budget. The massive housing programs in Algeria were another attempt to appease the population. However, the state hopelessly stayed behind its five-year plans, the citizens that were finally allocated newly built apartments had been waiting for ten years at least, and often the eviction of squatters was an unavoidable side-effect.

**Tourism:** In Jordan, as the economic situation without any hydrocarbon resources is much direr than in Algeria, revenues were sought from its unique historical resources, i.e. through rents and employment in the tourism sector. This fits well with the attempt to strengthen the tribal areas, as the most important sights are located in regions that used to be known for their loyalty to the monarchy. However, the regional instability turned holidays in the Middle East into a rather unlikely option for foreign tourists, and not even domestic tourism could be boosted.

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**Attempted transformation of subsidy system:** The desperate situation in Jordan that had necessitated an IMF loan led the government to overturn the fuel and cooking gas subsidies and replace it with a cash transfer system in late 2012. This only attempt to introduce a potentially sustainable economic policy change was rewarded with the most violent riots since the beginning of the Arab uprisings. The subsequent management strategy of returning to a price committee that sets fixed prices for the current month squarely contradicts the logic of reducing state intervention and leaves responsibility with the government, maintaining potential for future outbursts of popular anger.

### *Conclusion*

The main differences in material legitimation have their reason in the different resource endowment, making spending in Algeria massive and the search for income in Jordan more creative. In spite of the differences in structural conditions, the final conclusion reveals a similar pattern: both Jordan and Algeria resorted to emergency measures and failed to address the underlying economic challenges that had led to the massive discontent. One central reason for this decision and a part of the problem was that the citizens had profited from the rentierist allocation before and neither side was willing or able to negotiate over the conditions of achieving a transformation towards a more sustainable system. Especially the demographic challenge and youth unemployment are far from being tackled, as the elites prioritized the appeasement of their base instead of introducing a new social contract that could be a viable solution for the long term. It is remarkable enough that the short-sighted ad-hoc allocation has worked so far, but a return to populist measures seems to be the order of the day in the whole Arab world (Matzke 2012). A noteworthy result is that the previously dominant neoliberal policies were at least for some time superseded by the old spirit of collectivist material legitimation.

### **6.2.5. Personal Legitimation: Rotation vs. Paralysis**

#### *Similarities*

While protests in other Arab countries were among other things directed against personalist forms of rule and the individuals holding power, the rulers of Jordan and Algeria could not completely ignore this. As regards the legal basis for personalized rule, both rulers avoided introducing any changes that could be subject to criticism. Besides, there was no necessity for legal modifications in the course of 2011-2012. Both rulers were careful not to cede any of their power to prevent a watershed.

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The co-optation of reform-minded individual elites failed in both states, as the divergence between rhetoric and actions grew stronger.

### *Differences*

The consequences of protests on personal legitimization strategies differed strongly according to the respective regimes and time horizons.

### **Policy mode**

The reshuffling of elites is generally used to install loyal personnel. King Abdullah II used the tried and tested rotation of elites to alternate between rather security-oriented and reformist personalities. These quick reshuffles mirrored the balancing act of displaying both firm leadership and willingness to pursue meaningful political changes. During the potentially more critical moments – shortly after the beginning of the uprisings and when pushing through the new electoral law – the prime ministers were known to be conservative “hard-liners”. As regards the mechanism of rotation, Bouteflika untypically refrained from reshuffling his cabinet during the high tide of protests. Instead, he relied on the electoral engineering of the parliamentary elections to bring a confidant into the office of prime minister.

### **Symbolic mode**

In Jordan, the king tried to balance strategies that underline his personal credibility towards various actors. He used different discourses and symbolic actions towards security forces, the reformist opposition and external players. Bouteflika’s role was much less hands-on, probably due to his age and illness, but certainly also because of Algeria’s more complex institutional structure including a ruling party and the informal clan rivalry. The president was probably more concerned with securing his rule behind the scenes and setting the conditions for his reelection than with appealing to a reformist audience. This was a more important task for the Jordanian king who needs to keep his image as a progressive leader and reliable ally to attract Western funds, especially as the GCC accession came to stagnate. Therefore, he routinely throws his rhetorical weight into decisions, at the risk of creating disappointment whenever some policy was stopped by “dinosaurs”. While the trust of pro-reform actors has been lost through this ambivalent approach, as long as the other addressees are content, it is of little consequence.

### **Conclusion**

Ironically, one interview partner belonging to those Algerian activists who characterize themselves as “resistance, not opposition” praised one of the recent “reform” speeches



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by the Jordanian king in November 2013. This paradoxical effect is telling of the difference between inside and outside perceptions of reform rhetoric. But it also says something about the dearth of political communication in Algeria and the fading personal legitimacy – which at the time was characterized by the president’s post-stroke speechlessness.

### 6.2.6. Constraining Repression: The Autocrats’ Standard Repertoire

#### *Similarities*

As has been discussed in the conceptual part, constraining repression is at the core of authoritarian politics. During the Arab uprisings, protesters crossed many former red lines and broadened their room for maneuver. But especially after the uprising euphoria had ebbed away, all citizens were confronted with more constraining laws.

**Deliberalization:** One of many striking similarities between the two cases, which is already a finding from the (pretended) structural legitimation strategies, is that after some time modified legislation set even harsher rules for restricting civil liberties. This happened notably through vague wording in the revised press and associations laws guising the potential for arbitrary repression under undefined terms such as “national interest” or “national unity”. The limited freedom that was allowed to the press seemed to follow the principle that barking dogs never bite, in the sense that written criticism offered a safety valve for discontent, while more effective forms of activism were discouraged, not least through the use of force. In both cases, the close monitoring by security forces was evident, even though it could be discussed more publicly than ever before. However, no tangible concessions regarding a limitation of their roles were made.

**Internet activism:** Besides reform activists, Islamists and journalists, online activists suffered from the heaviest restrictions. At least in Algeria, the cyberspace was also used to strike back at possibly revolutionary elements and to disseminate rumors that were unfavorable to protesters. Draconian regulations in both cases and later even shutdowns impeded the work of both politicized bloggers and independent news websites. Most probably, this was an answer to some red lines that should not have been crossed, such as high-profile corruption charges in Jordan. Certainly, it is a decidedly anti-youth and counterrevolutionary development that seeks to reinforce the local bulwarks against the newly established regional dynamics of online activism.

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**Thugs:** One feature of constraining repression used during demonstrations was that the “dirty work”, i.e. beating protesters etc. was partly outsourced to thugs. They also acted as agents-provocateurs in vain trying to incite the protesters’ anger to give the police a reason for forceful intervention. This does not mean that the security forces did not assist them or act violently themselves. At the protest sites, tear-gassing and beating of protesters were frequent, affecting also known politicians and party leaders. The targets of intimidation were not confined to nameless low-profile activists in either case, as even the elderly and widely respected opposition leaders Hamza Mansour (IAF) and Ali Yahia Abdenmour (LADDH/CNCD) were threatened by thugs and beaten by police, respectively. Apparently the level of violence rose over the months of 2011, although the protesters remained peaceful.

**Geographical constraints:** While urban planning was not favorable to public protests in either state, the Jordanians later also adopted a spatial approach that had been employed in Algiers. The Algerian police forces had tried to prevent protests through their sheer size, but portable fences and road blocks for traffic control are part of the arsenal. In Amman, the fencing off and planting of protest-sensitive areas posed a more aesthetic, but in effective similar obstacle to public gatherings.

**Identity:** A common aspect of constraining repression was the (ab)use of the identity question. The term Palestinian/Kabylarian was suddenly used as an insult, in Jordan refugees were warned against political activity, and hysterical nationalist waves questioned the loyalty of the overwhelming majority of the respective populations. Sporadically, even derogatory statements about the protesters’ alleged religious affiliation were made to further discriminate against the mentioned groups. The effects in Jordan were that the Transjordanians were left suspicious and the Palestinian Jordanians insecure and disinclined to engage politically. In Algeria, the Kabylarian part of the population was less impressed, as they were vocal in their protests, but the continuous crackdowns led to their periodical disengagement.

**Negative framing:** The last similarity in constraining repression is also partly rooted in legitimization strategies towards nationalists and touches upon the legitimacy of repression itself. The combination of the elites’ rhetoric of stability versus *fitna*, the high security presence and even more traffic jams than usual probably led ordinary citizens to think that the protesters were acting at their own risk. As regards the question whether repression was regarded as justified, the defamation of reform activists certainly worked

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in the security service's favor. Even the patterns of instrumentalizing Islamist forces were similar in some respects. The jihadi Salafis in Jordan and former FIS leader Benhadj in Algeria were allowed to enter the political stage to discredit popular protests and to deter potential reform activists, but at the same time they were also the target of repression, both constraining and incapacitating.

### *Differences*

The main differences that can be discerned are that in Algeria, the grip on civil societal organizations was much tighter than in Jordan, as events could not be held and civic education was hardly possible for independent associations. Moreover, the general threshold for applying repression seemed somewhat lower than in Jordan. This especially affected the preventive use of security checks, amounting to closing off the capital when deemed necessary.

### *Conclusion*

In both cases, constraining repression was employed broadly. The targeted groups go well beyond street protesters, including all sorts of citizens that do not acquiesce to an apolitical way of life, and sometimes even those who happen to belong to a particular minority or adhere to a non-mainstream belief.

### **6.2.7. Incapacitating Repression: Low Death Toll, Full Prison Cells**

#### *Similarities*

In both Algeria and Jordan, the preconditions for the employment of incapacitating repression were given, i.e. the security apparatus possessed both the scope and cohesion for effective action. However, other factors influenced the actual use of repressive measures, most importantly regarding the characteristics of the challenges. The reform protests were not violent in either case, nor was the size of the threat in terms of the demands so dangerous as to trigger high-scale incapacitating repression. The same cannot be said of the tactics employed: the open-ended sit-ins that were organized resulted from the demonstration effect of successful protests in other Arab countries. The announcement not to leave the streets until political demands were met was much harder to cope with than the more frequent cases of socioeconomic protests. Moreover, the street politics threatened to undermine the self-declared leading role of regime elites in pursuing reform.

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**Killings:** The lethality of the protests in both countries was at the lower end of the Arab world. If the numbers are correct, less than ten citizens altogether lost their lives in direct relation to demonstrations in the two countries. However, the fact that an activist in Algeria was brutally murdered under obscure circumstances leaves the door wide open for speculations. At any rate, the number of self-immolations by far surpasses those of victims of government violence in both cases. Notably the shockingly high number of 80 suicides through fire in Algeria is a strong signal of desperation.

**Arrestment:** The form of incapacitating repression that prevailed in both Jordan and Algeria on a much larger scale was arrestment. Opposition leaders were only very temporarily targeted by these measures. Instead, mainly young rank-and-file activists ended up in jail or at a police station. The numbers of arrested activists were in the hundreds on various occasions in both countries, equaling a considerable share of protesters.

### *Differences*

There are noticeable differences between the different approaches towards arresting protesters. In Algeria, the arrests were preemptive in nature, detaining activists shortly before protests and releasing them afterwards. In Jordan, the arrests had a much more punitive character, as protesters tended to be detained on the spot and in part also arrested for a longer time. The most bizarre case in point in Jordan was the release of jihadi Salafis and the subsequent crackdown on them after the street battle in Zarqa had been provoked in April 2011. The State Security Court largely kept its jurisdiction over protesters, even though some of the convicted activists were later pardoned by the king.

### *Conclusion*

In spite of the lack of news coverage in the Western media, many forms of repression are employed in Jordan and Algeria. One of the more disturbing aspects is how protesters are treated as terrorists on the basis of laws governing the non-freedom of assembly and the judicial procedures upon arrestment. The use of this arsenal can be interpreted as a sign of incumbent elites' firm control – or fear.

### 6.3. SUCCESS, ADDRESSEES AND SEQUENCING OF STRATEGIES

Having compared the strategies that were employed, the next step is to establish which of these strategies were successful and why this was the case or not. Insights that help answer these questions are related to the sequencing of strategies and the different ad-

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dressées. The different use of modes shows some first patterns that are directly related to the underlying regime types and contiguous sources of possible legitimacy.

### 6.3.1. Modes of Legitimation Strategies

Summing up some of the results of the comparison, table 6.1 gives a rough overview of which modes were employed, indicating the intensive use of modes with a double x, which is defined for the sake of simplicity as more than one observed measure – as one might have been rather randomly employed. Single measures are signaled by a single x, and no observed strategy by “-”.

*Table 6.1: Patterns of Modes of Legitimation Strategies in Jordan and Algeria*

Type	Mode Subtype	Jordan			Algeria		
		Legal mode	Symbolic mode	Policy mode	Legal mode	Symbolic mode	Policy mode
<b>Structural</b>		xx	xx	xx	xx	x	x
<b>Traditional</b>		xx	xx	xx	-	-	-
<b>Identity-related</b>	Nationalism	x	xx	x	-	xx	-
	Religion	x	xx	x	-	x	xx
<b>Material</b>	Collectivism	x	x	xx	-	xx	xx
<b>Personal</b>		x	x	x	-	x	x

The overview shows clearly how the Jordanian approach towards tackling the crisis of legitimacy was more broadly based than the Algerian one. Not only could the Jordanian king make use of traditional legitimation in all modes, which is little surprising, but probably his elevated position enabled him to fully engage in crisis management in other domains as well. By contrast, the strength on the Algerian side is certainly material legitimation, the amounts of which are far beyond anything that tiny and poor Jordan could ever dream of. This is a strong hint at the continuation of the “classical” sources of legitimacy that are still employed.

Another observation regarding the modes is the tendency of more legal changes in Jordan. This could again be explained by the greater flexibility in the loyal and royal institutions, whereas the Algerian regime structures with rumbling in the FLN, rivaling clans and the hidden power of the generals made the legislative process somewhat less

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straightforward. However, this explanation is not convincing since the deliberalizing legislation package in Algeria was rushed through parliament on a single day. What happened in Jordan was that tackling one law after the other underlined the gradual approach to reform on the one hand and gave the appearance of a constant reform process on the other hand. This more continuous lawmaking, stretching over a longer period, was certainly also the attempt to play for time and wait for the opposition alliance to fall apart. The Algerian characteristic in the legal mode except for structural legitimation was a wait-and-see approach, refraining from lawmaking or quietly abandoning existing legislature.

### 6.3.2. Success and Failure of Strategies towards Different Addressees

The success or failure of legitimation strategies was defined in the conceptual part as acceptance or rejection, the success or failure of the more specific subtype co-optation is loyalty or opposition. Successful repression is deterrence, while failed repression can be measured as the continuation of protests. While it would be handy to boil the more detailed results down to an unambiguous statement regarding the success or failure of all strategies in the respective types, after the empirical analysis this seems close to impossible. Already the assessment of single strategies was oftentimes difficult, leading to ambiguous answers.

As has become evident in the discussion of the strategies' effects, a clear-cut categorization proved to be hard in many cases *ex post*. This is because the effects of some strategies turned out to completely contradict the way in which they were presented. This was the case e.g. in the deliberalizing political "reforms" that at the same time served as the legal basis for constraining repression. The second reason is that the strategies' indirect effects, i.e. on groups other than the immediate target group, are problematic to come to terms with. Especially in the identity-related strategies, negative rhetoric that served to appease some addressees excluded other parts of the population. These factors led to the picture that strategies which were presented and are categorized under legitimation did not have the effect of creating legitimacy. Rather, they served to buy the time which was needed to paralyze challengers, make the population tired of futile discussions on "reform" activism and to accommodate the direst needs deemed legitimate – primarily economic ones.

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As the aim of this study was to stress the addressees' perspective and to differentiate between different target groups, an extreme yes/no simplification regarding the success or failure of single strategies would not do the chosen approach justice. Therefore, the following section briefly discusses the tendency of strategies towards relevant addressees in order to approximate a conclusion.

The groups that profited most from the legitimization strategies in the wake of the uprisings in Jordan and Algeria were the regimes' backbones, notably public sector employees, more specifically security personnel, veterans and in Jordan also the tribes. This option was preferred over the near impossibility of regaining legitimacy in the eyes of those challengers who in some cases had basically waited for the right moment to voice their long-standing protest. Instead, classical measures of co-optation towards current and former supporters were intensified and internal power relations clarified. To generalize this finding, the prevalent pattern is that in times of crisis, rulers deem it most important to ascertain their (previous) supporters' loyalty.

As discussed before, the strategies targeted at Islamist and Salafi movements were a mixture of co-optation – which largely failed – and repression. Ruling elites acted highly pragmatically, ignoring ideological differences for the sake of tactical maneuvers. In a slightly different vein, they considered the role of ideology in increasing the number of state imams, which aimed at reinforcing the state's sovereignty over the interpretation of Islam and pushing aside alternatives.

Journalists were deliberately targeted by especially constraining repression in both cases, online bloggers in an intensified form, leading some of them to exert more self-censorship than during the height of the uprisings. Where this did not work, technical measures were employed to counter the outspokenness. Regarding more elitist journalists, co-optation attempts were directed towards opinion leaders, nevertheless generating mixed results.

The youth as the group who had been most active in kicking off the protests in early 2011 were largely neglected. As a target group of legitimization, they were considered to a somewhat larger degree in Algeria than in Jordan, as they were massively subsidized through the ANSEJ program and at least on paper attained the right to be voted into parliament with the lowering of the eligibility age to 23, which remained at 30 in Jordan. Other than that, no measures were set in place that would enhance their prospects for the future, such as the creation of decent employment, better education or putting the

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country's economy generally on a more sustainable track. Instead, informal, irregular and even illegal structures were strengthened.

Professional groups on strike were treated one by one and had parts of their demands satisfied in a piecemeal manner. This compartmentalized approach served to avoid the emergence of a larger labor protest. Therefore, professional associations held more frequent work stoppages and sit-ins to attain further concessions. After initial courtesy and recognition of demands on behalf of state authorities, unwillingness to accept low-scale accommodation often led to more repressive behavior which negatively impacted on the strikers as regards freedoms, job security and reputation. Generally, trade unions and similarly organizations of unemployed are groups that will continue to protest after some time.

The protest movements in general were confronted with more repression than legitimization. The concessions that would have satisfied the protesters were too far-reaching for regime elites. As the analysis of the case studies showed, the potentially challenging cross-cutting oppositional alliances failed to gather momentum. They led the ruling elites only to superficial tactical concessions which basically served to take the dynamic out of the protest movements, introducing deliberalization instead of ceding power. The protests that are still frequently staged have come to be almost institutionalized, yet fail to trigger profound changes.

Finally, some temporarily successful strategies of legitimization were employed towards the citizenry as a whole. Among the rhetorical arguments that were brought forward the strongest was probably the stability frame. This was backed up by massive material allocation which overcharged the state budgets, even in oil-rich Algeria. However, high abstention rates in elections are indicative of a lack of support for existing institutions, and skepticism about the future is widespread. Moreover, the rising perception of and discontent with large-scale corruption has become an important societal feature which in the future is likely to remain one of the main triggers for protests.

### 6.3.3. Sequencing Strategies of Political Rule

Regarding the sequencing of different strategies of political rule, interesting dynamics could be observed. The sequencing of repression and legitimization shows that in the decisive moments of possible mobilization dynamics, security forces acted with some restraint. This does not mean that they didn't employ violence, but an outrageously dis-



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proportionate use of force was avoided. Obviously, the intensity of repression was supposed to be sufficient to actually constrain activists, but not to provoke the rage of previously unpoliticized citizens or even the international community. Moreover, it should serve as a deterrent to others. In contrast, in later phases of contestation “stubborn” protesters were more likely to be subject to harassment than before.

Another interesting aspect pertains to the geographic dimension of the different strategies. In the Algerian capital, especially in the politically more sensitive areas, protests were far less tolerated than in more peripheral neighborhoods or cities. Almost the opposite was true in Jordan, where the crackdown on tribal areas was much harsher than in Amman, probably due to a higher institutionalization and “professionalism” of protests in the capital.

The more radical and usually repressed groups in both countries willingly used the brief opportunity to appear in the public, as a feeling of broadened space and new liberties encouraged citizens. However, this short time of revealing the existing spectrum of societal forces did not mark the beginning of a new era of openness. The radical forces’ existence deterred the silent majority and showed them what would happen if freedom was actually unlimited. This was probably one crucial prerequisite for citizens to accept the subsequent deliberalization.

The way in which incapacitating repression was employed was rather precisely targeted, while constraining repression turned against a wide variety of groups and in many cases simply all citizens. In general, the uneasy impression is that negative strategies, i.e. repression and exclusionary strategies of legitimation, were temporarily more successful than positive strategies. This is because they worked as a deterrent for activists, whether because of reputational or physical factors. The lacking willingness to fundamentally change power structures sent the message that forcing change would not be possible without bloodshed.

### 6.4. TESTING AND REVIEWING THE HYPOTHESES

After the inductively guided discussion of the strategies of political rule, it is necessary to relate the empirical findings back to the conceptual chapter. This enables us to make more general statements in the sense of typological theorizing and will be done by taking a look at the hypotheses that were presented in the conceptual chapter to reconsider which have been strengthened or falsified or what new causal relationships can be sug-

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gested. The aim of this subchapter is to check which hypotheses elucidate outcomes at various points in the causal chain, reaching from the characteristics of a challenge to the choice of strategies, including their type, number, addressees, chance for success and interrelation to overcoming the crisis of legitimacy.

The first hypothesis referred to the number and success of legitimation strategies, claiming that the more strategies of legitimation are used, the higher the likeliness that some are successful and the crisis of legitimacy can be overcome ( $H_{\text{number}}$ ). Turning to our cases, the number of measures put in place was higher in Jordan than in Algeria. However, this did not automatically translate in a higher likeliness for success, as many of these failed. In this perspective, the hypothesis is falsified – or it posits a too simple relation, as the number of strategies alone does not help explain much.

A more precise hypothesis taking into account the target groups suggests that strategies of legitimation concentrated on few addressees have higher chances for success, but at the expense of others' approval ( $H_{\text{fewaddressees}}$ ). This relation mirrors how any ruler walks the tightrope of pondering which societal groups are so important for his survival that legitimacy in their eyes is actually required. Some strategies that incumbents in Jordan and Algeria used hint at their reluctance to be perceived as serving only particular interests. The material legitimation strategies, especially as regards subsidies and allocation, show the ambiguous but existing will to garner support on a broad basis. Groups which are more intensively pampered include state employees, especially the security apparatus, the co-optation of which is vital for the rulers. While the success in these cases could be secured, others' perception of this fact has not been investigated in the empirical analysis. It remains a task of further research to analyze the interrelations between different target groups.

To make more specific statements about the regime base, the hypothesis has been put forward that co-optation that aims at strengthening the regime base is more likely to be successful than attempts at its widening ( $H_{\text{base}}$ ). This proposed relation can be corroborated with reference to various examples of failure from both cases. The rigged elections and futile reform commissions in Algeria and Jordan as well as the Jordanian government reaching out to the IAF are cases in point that mark the continued disapproval of important political forces. Attempts aimed at widening the regime bases failed in most instances, whereas especially the traditional legitimation strategies in Jordan worked

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better. The same holds true for the moment as regards the material benefits to public sector and security personnel, similarly to the hypothesis on few addressees.

Another hypothesis relating to few addressees concerned repression, assuming that repression is more successful if it is precisely targeted and not employed in an indiscriminate way ( $H_{\text{target}}$ ). There is hardly any variance in our case studies, therefore it is difficult to corroborate this hypothesis. What can be said is that in managing the reform protests, the strategies employed by riot police in both Jordan and Algeria also seemed to implicitly follow this assumption. While constraining repression did not deter all protesters, it worked somewhat better towards the broader population. The low level of lethal incapacitating repression impeded solidarity with the protesters instead of mobilizing apolitical citizens.

Going further, a posited relation said that repression is more likely to be regarded as legitimate if it is directed at groups that are excluded anyway than if it targets the former regime base ( $H_{\text{legrepression}}$ ). The aspect of repressing excluded groups was the case in Jordan where the crackdown against Salafis was probably seen with relief by many citizens. Furthermore, the depiction of the March 24 Youth as a purely Palestinian movement also helped defend the violent dispersal of the sit-in. The parts of the former regime bases that protested in Jordan, i.a. military veterans, were met with legitimization strategies. Towards tribes, the picture is more complicated, as the *Hirak* suffered from repression, while tribal elders and tribal areas in general were considered through material and traditional legitimation. The pattern that can be seen is that those who voice socioeconomic concerns are less likely to face repression than politicized protesters. However, in the more violent situations of fuel riots in Jordan and riots and forceful evictions in Algeria, the reverse was true. A refined hypothesis can be distilled from these considerations, saying that *non-violent political protests are more likely to be repressed than non-violent socioeconomic protests* ( $H_{\text{peace}}^*$ ).

Based on a claim by Juan Linz, the competition of legitimizing formulae is expected to affect the success of otherwise working strategies ( $H_{\text{contradictions}}$ ). While this hypothesis sounds very appealing and intricate, it is hard to prove empirically. The inductive comparison has found an additional contradiction that poses a problem to the success of strategies of legitimation: contradictions between different modes. Regarding various issues in both analyzed cases, the rhetoric especially on reform was squarely contradicted by either the legal or policy modes. However, the different addressees of the symbol-

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ic mode often accounted for this contradiction, especially as an external audience appreciates reform rhetoric and cares less about what exactly becomes of it. The price elites have to pay is a loss of credibility on the domestic level in the eyes of those who are promised reform, but then the analysis has shown that protesters are not a top priority addressee of actual legitimation. However, such contradictions can lead to a loss of trust, a negative effect of learning that promises are usually not kept.<sup>281</sup> A modified hypothesis would claim that *when different modes relating to one strategy of legitimation diverge, the strategy's success is threatened* ( $H^*_{\text{modescontradict}}$ ).

The cross-national advantage that was presumed to exist if war or insecurity were present in a neighboring country ( $H_{\text{advantage}}$ ) turned out to be exploited on the discourse level not only cross-space, but also cross-time in the case of Algeria. This framing was also one of the more successful ones, actually resonating with people's personal assessments. Rhetorically, stability was presented as a reason for legitimacy. Conceptually, the cross-national and cross-time arguments do not neatly fit in any category of the typology that was used for analyzing the two case studies. The risk of civil war and protracted chaos has so far been considered in terms of alternatives that are at the heart of the contenders' cost-benefit calculus as the reasons for mobilization or non-mobilization. As this frame is especially pertinent once protests have already started, it is relevant at a dynamic moment when protesters decide on how to proceed further. The hypothesis can be specified to claim that *if war or insecurity existed in a country or still exists in a neighboring country, protests are likely to remain limited in scope* ( $H^*_{\text{stability}}$ ). Going back to a hypothesis suggested by Przeworski, a lack of perceived alternatives as regards political personnel and the regime can legitimize the status quo ( $H_{\text{alternatives}}$ ). This proved to be one of the most pertinent arguments that explain the lack of meaningful changes in both cases. In Algeria, the reputation of most politicians is tainted through their closeness to the *pouvoir* (FLN and offshoots) or their role in the context of the military coup (RCD). By the end of the 2000 years, Werenfels notes that "no strong and coherent preferable alternative in the sense of Przeworski was able to emerge" (2009: 183). In Jordan, a republican system with strong political parties seems to be an unthinkable option. While a constitutional monarchy is desired by some, it is rather unlikely to evolve anytime soon as long as the very gradual approach to reform is continued.

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<sup>281</sup> It would be interesting to contrast this with a case in which actions and words concur, even if in a negatively framed way, to find out about the different psychological consequences for citizens.

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As regards the more specific types of legitimation, it has been proposed that traditional legitimation is more likely to be successful in a monarchy ( $H_{\text{tradition}}$ ). As in Algeria references to traditions are subsumed under the identity-related forms of legitimation, the literal understanding of traditional legitimacy is a prerogative of monarchical Jordan. In the context of this thesis, the hypothesis seems rather tautological and could at most be tested in a dynastic republic.<sup>282</sup>

Another hypothesis stated that material legitimation is more successful in those cases where no immediate regional comparative disadvantage is present ( $H_{\text{material}}$ ). Algeria qualifies as a rather rich country that massively makes use of material allocation. However, because citizens are aware of the state's wealth, they decry the ineffective and unjust distribution of resources, complaining about corruption rather than rejoicing over state spending. The regional environment hardly plays a role here. As regards Jordan, it is poor anyhow, but material allocation does not work worse because of the existence of neighboring Saudi Arabia, as the differences between those countries are too large. Therefore, the comparative research design did not allow for a fair test of this hypothesis.

Further hypotheses, based on Weyland's considerations, focus on the protest movements. The first hypothesis states that the more citizens regard their domestic structures as similar to those in a case of successful protests, the more likely they are to engage in contentious action ( $H_{\text{similar}}$ ). The successful ouster of rulers in Tunisia (14 January) and Egypt (11 February) had preceded the important protests in Algeria (12 February) and Jordan (24 March). The demonstration effect of the Egyptian example was referenced more often in both cases due to the country's central role in the region. Celebrations in both Jordan and Algeria took place in front of the Egyptian embassies and elsewhere and were treated almost as a domestic event.<sup>283</sup> Despite the newly recovered pan-Arab solidarity, differences were pointed out more frequently than similarities by my interview partners. The arguments they put forward in Jordan were that the domestic regime was "less evil" than the Egyptian one, while in Algeria the reason was given that civil society was not developed enough to allow for a similar degree of contentious action. The hypothesis that results from the empirical analysis is therefore the negative version

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<sup>282</sup> Still it cannot be completely excluded that an attempt at establishing a familial succession might take place in Algeria.

<sup>283</sup> Personal interview with political scientist, April 2011, Amman.

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of Weyland's statement and says that *when the domestic structures are regarded as being dissimilar from those of countries with successful protests, engagement in contentious politics is cautious* ( $H^*_{\text{dissimilar}}$ ).

Following the hypothesis on the "king's advantage" and the similarity hypothesis, republics should generally be more prone to protests than monarchies during the Arab uprisings ( $H_{\text{republic}}$ ). According to this hypothesis, Algerians should have been more prone to protest than Jordanians. Empirically, this is difficult to establish, as the level and course of protests were rather similar in both cases. What can be said at any rate is that the protests in Algeria more often included an anti-personal element than in Jordan. The hypothesis can thus be refined to claim that *protesters in republics are more prone to directly attack the ruler than in monarchies* ( $H^*_{\text{ruler}}$ ).

The final hypothesis asked whether better organized protest movements are less radical than spontaneous movements ( $H_{\text{organization}}$ ). While this hypothesis is hard to test, both cases offer partial support. The oppositional alliances tried to be broad in scope, covering both formerly co-opted elites such as opposition parties, well-known opponents who had at times been repressed and at times tolerated, and finally new actors, most prominently the youth. This combination explains that the demands remained within limits that were agreed upon and that did not scare off more established political actors. The more extreme sporadic outbursts of popular anger in Jordan were the result of individual or spontaneous, locally limited action, while the protest leaders backpedaled. The hypothesis can therefore preliminarily be corroborated.

To conclude, some hypotheses turned out to be too general to apply and others could not be tested, which is a consequence of the two cases studied that were selected independently from the generation of the hypotheses. Nevertheless, several hypotheses could be strengthened and as many as five have been refined as a result of the empirical analysis.

### 6.5. CONCLUSION: CRISES OVERCOME?

To conclude the comparison, the analysis including the brief look at addressees and the sequencing of strategies leaves serious doubts whether the crisis of legitimacy in both cases could be solved. It would be rather surprising if an increased use of repression and deliberalization helped create new legitimacy, even in the eyes of the repressed groups' enemies. The crises of legitimacy which many formal political institutions in both cases

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suffer from continue to exist. No upgrading of credibility could be attained through the sloppy changes of the regulations concerning parties, elections and parliaments. Instead, these institutions again served to co-opt and strengthen regime-friendly parts of the population. As the oppositional movements correctly diagnosed these co-optation attempts, the majority of them resisted.

In order to establish whether the crises of legitimacy in general still exist it is helpful to briefly recall the definition: “a situation in which the basis on which authority has been claimed or acknowledged is under such severe stress that there is a strong possibility of its destruction and transformation” (Alagappa 1995b: 59). The empirical analyses of the Jordanian and Algerian cases showed that although legitimacy could hardly be reestablished, the “severe stress” of protests and possible oppositional action has been reduced through a mix of different strategies, including repression. Rather than through legitimization, the imminent crises that the political protests presented could be deferred through resorting to the more “negative” strategies of repression and divide-and-rule as well as the rhetoric of deterrence by reference to chaos and instability. Both the challengers and defenders of the systems exerted a degree of self-restraint in voicing their demands and in repressing them respectively. In the end, they seemed to be unwillingly united in their preference for stability over an uncertain, but certainly more violent, outcome, at the expense of truly legitimate rule.

If we recall the proposed definition of stability as the low probability of an imminent regime breakdown, the prerequisites for inducing such a breakdown are not given at the present moment. This does not exclude that in the middle term they may emerge again, but for the time being a precarious equilibrium has been achieved. This becomes clearer considering a systems theoretical definition of stability as the ability to absorb pressures for change and maintain the system’s structure despite necessary adaptations: one can argue that incumbent elites stepped up their crisis management in a way as to arrive at exactly this kind of stability (Schmidt 2003: 35).

The somewhat surprising result is that rulers in Algeria and Jordan have consolidated regime stability without achieving legitimacy in the eyes of most challengers, but through delegitimizing them and simultaneously attempting to renew legitimacy on the part of the long-standing, recently neglected base. While the crises of legitimacy could not be solved, the acute crises of *stability* were overcome as the protests faded and repression rose.

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This last chapter first summarizes the approach employed in this thesis before presenting the key findings of the empirical analysis. The final assessment of the strategies that were employed in 2011 looks into the question what is actually particular about the Arab uprisings as crises of legitimacy through a brief comparison to previous crises. This chapter then addresses the limits of the study and goes beyond the suggested analytical framework in suggesting avenues for further research, one important aspect of which is the regional embedment, asking whether authoritarian learning could be observed in the present case studies. The concluding parts of this chapter give a brief outlook on the future of Jordan and Algeria given more recent events before finally considering consequences for Arab and other authoritarian rulers enduring crises in general.

#### **7.1. SUMMARY OF THESIS**

This thesis tackled the pertinent issue of legitimacy crises through an analysis of two cases of regime survival after the Arab uprisings. The point of departure was the debate on whether autocratic legitimacy can exist in the first place. While many normative understandings of legitimacy exist, empirical analytical approaches enable us to study different types of autocratic legitimation, as many classical works demonstrate. In order to approach relevant analytical categories, different aspects of legitimation and other strategies of political rule were considered. First I discussed how likely crises of different sources of legitimacy are as a backdrop to the current crisis during the Arab uprisings. For building an analytical framework, an alternative typology of legitimation strategies situated on a medium level of abstraction was distilled from the literature. These types, namely structural, traditional, identity-related, material and personal legitimation were derived from a discussion of general political science approaches, most prominently Weber and Easton, and studies on the Arab world, enabling a further subcategorization of some types. Authoritarian regimes not only use legitimation, but also repression in order to reestablish stability. Therefore, a subtypology of repression was introduced that enables a holistic look at strategies of political rule especially in times of crisis. Regarding both sets of strategies, one decisive dimension of analysis is the respective addressee. The addressee's response to these strategies is central for empirically assessing the



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latter's success or failure. As a further dimension, this study took into account the different modes of the employed strategies, categorized into a legal, symbolic and policy mode, also studying their interaction. The conceptual chapter offered a multitude of working hypotheses, which were partly derived from the general discussions of strategies of political rule. Some of them were borrowed from literature on authoritarian rule in the Arab world, including recent research on the 2011 uprisings in particular. Moreover, current debates on the continued value of authoritarianism research and the regime question of monarchies versus republics were considered.

Along the principles of a most dissimilar systems design, two case studies of states in which regimes survived despite recurrent protests were chosen. The chapter on the methodology justified the qualitative approach and presented the used methods and sources. In the empirical chapters, first an overview over the different regime structures, sources of legitimacy and levels of repression was given. Subsequently, a thick description of the central demonstrations of the Jordanian and Algerian uprisings respectively served to shed light on the interaction between protesters and governments. A sketch of the development of the protest movements, their demands and tactics delineated the challenges the ruling elites faced. Using the qualitative method of process tracing, the bulk of the empirical analysis was devoted to presenting the strategies of political rule that were employed in Jordan and Algeria. The considered time span ranged from early 2011 until the respective following legislative elections. After the analysis of legitimacy within the different modes along the typology presented above, the addressees' responses were considered. Having tackled legitimation, strategies that fall within the two proposed subtypes of repression were analyzed, again taking into account the addressees.

The comparative chapter first discussed the intensity of the crises of legitimacy in both cases before dealing with the various subtypes of strategies of political rule, elaborating on the respective mechanisms that guided the employment of similar measures. Afterwards, the differences within the types were highlighted and accounted for on the basis of structural, historical, regime- and actor-related factors. In a further step, the hypotheses were tested and, if necessary, modified. For assessing the success and failure of the various strategies and thus the potential end of the crises of legitimacy, the target groups were considered. Moreover, some thoughts on the sequencing of legitimation and repression shed light on the dynamics of protests and responses.

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### 7.2. KEY FINDINGS

The Arab uprisings have served as an excellent crisis of legitimacy to study different strategies of political rule. While for some researchers the uprisings since 2011 ushered in a new era of potential democratization and the scholarly return to the transitology paradigm, the analysis of Jordan's and Algeria's responses to the protests showed that the literature on authoritarianism is still well suited to explain what is going on in these countries. The analysis has produced mixed results as regards the uniqueness of this wave of protests, as its particularity is hard to feel in states that did not domestically experience world shaking changes. There are even remarkable similarities with previous patterns of crisis management, which a diachronic comparison to the regime strategies that followed the protests at the end of the 1980s would reveal, and some of which have been hinted at in the course of the empirical chapters. Therefore, some brief considerations shall assess the significance of the uprisings for Jordan and Algeria.

Basically all strategies that were part and parcel of the new literature on authoritarianism dating from the 2000s have been employed also in and after 2011. The only strategy of upgrading authoritarianism as described by Heydemann that had a lower profile was what he had called "capturing the benefits of selective economic reforms" (2007: 13). While the current mass allocation tries to make up for some of the downside effects on the broader population, nevertheless the bulk of economic elites continue to profit from their cronyism. Relating this development of legitimation strategies to the terminology suggested by Albrecht and Schlumberger (2004: 383), the previous shift from allocative to inclusionary co-optation has been reversed again.

So, one key finding of this study is how unspectacular the Arab uprisings turned out in Algeria and Jordan. In other Arab countries, the uprisings were an epoch-making phenomenon that led to the most significant political changes in decades. To judge from the side of Jordanian and Algerian decision makers, the Arab uprisings "only" necessitated regular crisis management. Although no surprisingly new strategies were employed, their scope, intensity and comprehensiveness are a signal that there is an awareness of potentially threatening dynamics and consequences. At least, the rulers dealt with the protests as they did with previous crises of legitimacy, using the full repertoire of strategies for upgrading authoritarianism with a twist towards more repression as time went by. The exceptional regional circumstances were mainly hinted at in discourse and through the breadth of employed strategies.

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What is remarkable still is the pan-Arab character of the protests, including solidarity across the region. Furthermore and perhaps owing to new technologies, the quicker pace of the recent events is noteworthy. In Algeria, the previous period of liberalization stretched over a couple of years from 1989 until 1991, while in Jordan it even lasted until 1993 before deliberalization induced the containment of Islamic movements in both countries. But in the past wave, the scale of liberalization measures was more impressive than the vague reform promises since 2011. The starting point was much lower back then, enabling more concessions. On the negative side, the initial repression of the uprisings in Algeria in 1988 was so violent that the subsequent opening of political life was a way out of an impasse. Of course, a detailed analysis of past events with the help of the framework set up in this study would merit a thesis of its own. The bottom line is that by and large, the current strategies do not represent anything new in the historical context. A lack of creativity in regime strategies becomes evident when compared to the crisis management following the 1987-1988 riots in both countries. As the level of liberalization had been pushed before, it was impossible to cede more power and risk the implosion of the established power structures. Therefore, despite the raised expectations, the gains in freedom and responsiveness towards the citizens stayed way behind the liberalization of the late 1990s. To the contrary, the quick deliberalization shows that the elites try to proceed with their authoritarian business as usual.

While some might argue that all government actions were only reactions to protests, through these strategies incumbents created facts to which the challengers had to adapt. And after the consolidation through legislative elections buried the last hopes for profound change, many former activists have disengaged and wait in resignation for the next triggers that offer a new chance for protests, which are certain to come.

Many citizens were little inclined to believe the discourse on political reform, as they perceived that the changes pursued during the uprisings fell far behind the liberalization that elites in both countries had kicked off at the end of the 1980s. For the matter of legitimation, it is important that the empty talk about political reform that is employed even in times of deliberalization diminishes the credibility of any current measures. To the contrary, the crises posed by the Arab uprisings offered the perfect occasion for re-introducing deliberalization and harsher forms of repression. The reactive and delayed nature of concessions demonstrates that many strategies are much more part of power games than of responsiveness to the population's demands.

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In an earlier comparative analysis of Jordan and Algeria, Cavatorta and Elananza had concluded that “legitimacy is not necessary for authoritarian regimes to survive” (2008: 577). They showed how the opposition movements in both countries could not unite across ideological cleavages during the 2000s and fell prey to divide-and-rule strategies, rather than being able to present a viable alternative to politics. In 2011, the situation looked similar. However, this was not due to an ideological impossibility of alliance-building. Rather, the means of contestation were subject to dispute, and mistrust of the partners’ intentions, partly based on historical experience, made the opposition susceptible to the seeds of division. Furthermore, regime discourse regarding the advantages of stability played a role. Paradoxically, on the one hand the lack of more intensive protests resulted from the protesters’ fear of history repeating itself, but on the other hand, the limited success of legitimation strategies was in part due to the effect of history repeating itself – this time in terms of a lack of tangible change.

Turning to the results of the comparison, not only did history repeat itself, but the two cases located in different Arab subregions and displaying enormous structural differences revealed astounding similarities. This was apparent in the choice of strategies, sometimes down to the level of single measures and mechanisms, especially in the structural, identity-related and material subtypes of legitimation strategies as well as both subtypes of repression. As a tendency, the strategies geared towards the opposition were rejected, while the lost regime bases were partly recovered through successful strategies of legitimation.

Due to the complexity of strategies employed in the two cases, the very general hypotheses were not easy to test. Reasons were the contradictory effects of strategies of legitimation and the differences regarding success or failure in relation to the respective addressees and indirect effects on other groups. E.g. the number of strategies has little explanatory power unless more details are considered. In some cases, especially referring to the content-wise types of legitimation, the comparative design did not allow for a coherent test of hypotheses. Still, some proposed causal relations presented in the conceptual part could be corroborated. Most prominently, the “strengthening the regime base” subtype of co-optation is more likely to be successful than the “widening the regime base” subtype ( $H_{\text{base}}$ ). Precisely targeted repression is still expected to be more successful than indiscriminate repression ( $H_{\text{target}}$ ). What is a definite result of the empirical analysis is that a lack of perceived alternatives as regards political personnel and the

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regime can legitimize the status quo ( $H_{\text{alternatives}}$ ). Finally, better organized protest movements in the analyzed cases were less radical than spontaneous movements ( $H_{\text{organization}}$ ). Further hypotheses were modified as a result of the comparison, many of them referring to protesters' interaction with incumbents:

- When different modes relating to one strategy of legitimation diverge, the strategy's success is threatened ( $H^*_{\text{modescontradict}}$ ).
- When the domestic structures are regarded as being dissimilar from those of countries with successful protests, engagement in contentious politics is cautious ( $H^*_{\text{dissimilar}}$ ).
- If war or insecurity existed in a country or still exists in a neighboring country, protests are likely to remain limited in scope ( $H^*_{\text{stability}}$ ).
- Protesters in republics are more prone to directly attack the ruler than in monarchies ( $H^*_{\text{ruler}}$ ).
- Non-violent political protests are more likely to be repressed than non-violent socio-economic protests ( $H^*_{\text{peace}}$ ).

From the outset, both Jordan and Algeria combined various factors that cause instability in such a balanced manner as to perpetuate this state and therefore retain a precarious sort of stability. However, the lack of a serious challenge despite the formation of broadly based oppositional alliances made it easy to resort to manifold strategies, not all of which served to regain legitimacy and not all of which were successful.

The multitude of strategies employed in Jordan is partly a result of monarchical rule. The king has more leeway because of a lower degree of institutionalization, while in Algeria entrenched interests, both from the FLN and other political parties as well as the generals and spooks behind the scenes impede a similar degree of activities. The concentration of power brings about the capability to juggle with a multitude of measures and to quickly adapt to changing circumstances.

The comparative advantage that was hypothesized in the conceptual chapter turned out to work both in a cross-national and cross-temporal dimension. Violent conflicts, i.e. the civil wars in Syria nowadays and in Algeria during the 1990s are a deterrent for social mobilization that would bring about uncertain results. The elites' discourse on stability thus struck a chord with the population and led to diminishing the challenge. However, it is important to look at which of the individual strategies were successful in bringing

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about the overall outcome of regime survival. One important result of this nuanced perspective on the crises of legitimacy is that the primary addressees of successful strategies of legitimation were groups that were either long-time beneficiaries of the regime or elites themselves. In contrast, legitimation strategies towards oppositional movements and protesters largely failed, while the latter were oftentimes deterred through defamation and other negative strategies, not least repression.

### **7.3. ADDED VALUE AND LIMITS OF THE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK**

The added value of the analytical framework chosen for this thesis is the disaggregated look at grand issues of political science. Through a focus on the addressees of single measures and a preliminary assessment of their acceptance or rejection of these strategies, this study showed that Jordan and Algeria survived the Arab uprisings without solving their crises of legitimacy in a sustainable way as to allow for long-term stability. In various parts of this study, the limits of what can reliably be stated regarding such complex phenomena have become apparent. Methodologically, it began with the opacity of authoritarian regime structures and the question how to find out what citizens actually believe. Conceptually, the pivotal question revolves around the definition – or lack thereof – of central phenomena, the elephant in the room being stability. This problem could be tackled through keeping it largely out of the empirical analysis itself and only reintroducing it in the summaries and the comparative chapter. As is the case so often, this thesis shows that regime stability is overdetermined. Due to the similarity of more strategies than could be expected, it was not possible to single out a specific factor that accounts for the longevity of the two cases, and even the most dissimilar cases research design did not allow for an unambiguous result. However, this had been somewhat expected, as equifinality is assumed to be at work to generate such a complex outcome. The interaction of various factors and actors worked together to secure the regimes' preliminary survival despite a protracted crisis of legitimacy in both cases.

The framework requires some in-depth knowledge about regime structures to locate the addressees of different strategies. This is a contrast to e.g. Gerschewski's (2013) model of stabilizing pillars of authoritarian regimes, which can be more easily applied to a large range of cases, but uses indicators that are too crude to explain actual dynamics. As regards the location of measures in the suggested typology, it was not always straightforward to trace and assess the strategies that were not openly "sold" as reform,

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crisis management or the like. Omissions can therefore not be excluded. Only studying two cases, it was hard to keep track of all addressees and especially to find reliable data on their responses; sometimes it was simply not possible. This would necessitate more extensive qualitative field work, investigating e.g. either specific groups or single strategies.

The analytical distinction between different modes in the typology of legitimation was important in order to detect the contradictions, even if it was not always elegant when different elements of one strategy popped up in various parts of a chapter, especially the discourse on a specific topic and its actual implementation.

The dynamics of the relationship between ruling elites and challengers could only be acknowledged to a limited degree. An element of interaction was considered in analyzing the addressees' responses to different strategies and in the description of the protests at the beginning of the uprisings. Nevertheless, the analysis of the strategies proceeded in a rather static way, which oftentimes resulted in short passages reporting various actions and reactions even before presenting the responses. For gaining more profound insights into the formation of decisions on both sides, a method that can better account for the cyclical nature of protests and responses with actors adapting to each other's behavior would be desirable. Although cycles of contention feature prominently in Social Movement Theory (see Tarrow 1993), this strand of literature offers few instruments for explaining *causal* mechanisms. In the comparative chapter, a look at the sequencing of the strategies was a first step in this direction, but a coherent analytical tool would still be desirable.

One shortcoming of the approach of studying the elites' strategies towards and responses by societal groups one by one is that it only marginally considers the relation *between* different societal actors. Apart from the benefit of shedding light on the incumbents' decisions to respond to the demands of some groups and reject others, it might also be interesting to study how the different groups perceive of each other and how they reflect on regime strategies in a contextualized manner. This would allow for more substantial statements about the prospects for societal structures and actions.

By and large, the suggested framework allowed for nuanced findings as regards the impact of the analyzed strategies. However, it neglected other factors that have an influence on the outcome of regime survival. Most prominently, the role of the military and the security services in general, which are the decisive actors in actually employing re-

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pression, would need to be taken into account if one was to study diverging paths of crises of legitimacy, including both regime survival and breakdown. So while a more differentiated perspective on the addressees solved one shortcoming of previous research, further studies could put a focus on the diversity of decision-making elites and their interaction with societal addressees.

### **7.4. AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

As the study of two precariously stable cases that have survived the Arab uprisings showed, a shift from the authoritarianism to the transitology paradigm in studying the Arab world would be premature and only appropriate for studying a narrow set of cases. It makes sense to depart from given regime characteristics, which are authoritarian in the majority of cases, and then choose appropriate approaches. Nevertheless, this analysis has produced findings that partly tie in with existing literature and partly hint at neglected factors, opening up various avenues for further research.

The central conceptual desiderate is still to come to terms with a definition of regime stability. Although the empirical analysis was rather disillusioning as regards the success of legitimation, it is worthwhile to consider the temporarily successful attempts at attaining legitimacy. This relates only to a narrowly defined part of the population, but obviously to a vital one. Mechanisms of co-optation are widely used, but their sustainability is subject to question and deserves closer attention. This might again bear important consequences for stability.

Conceptually, a bias towards legitimation in the literature also exists in the approach of this thesis. More “negative” strategies such as repression only now find their way back into qualitative scholarly debates. But beyond repression, more subtle mechanisms of deterrence through framing are understudied in the literature on authoritarian rule. This includes framing that uses the stability and comparative arguments and to a lesser degree divide-and-rule strategies. Moreover, the legitimacy of repression or the attempt by security forces to appear as highly professional and legitimately applying force is a recurrent topic that has not been specified conceptually. Empirically, such attempts were observed in both case studies.

The analytical framework presented is general enough to be applied to cases from other world regions in order to study strategies of political rule in different authoritarian settings. A cross-regional comparative analysis could highlight whether other regimes are



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more successful in overcoming crises of legitimacy. It would be especially interesting to find out whether the trend of employing more “negative” strategies is a common feature of current autocracies. This could offer clues to answer the question whether after a decade of liberalized autocracy a new decade of more intolerant and uncompromising forms of authoritarian rule is looming.

Owing to the breadth of the framework, some of the strategies were treated rather shortly. Regarding legitimation, it is possible to focus on single types and to study the interaction or contradictions between the different modes in more detail. Extending the timeframe to a longer period could enable us to observe shifting patterns of both strategies and responses. From a methodological point of view, such an approach makes sense to study the addressees’ responses more closely, as it is difficult to even identify and map all relevant actors for each strategy. Concerning repression, one could go beyond the differentiation between the two subtypes according to their effect. One earlier finding was that constraining repression is a constantly used characteristic of authoritarian rule (Josua & Edel 2014: 16f.), but also regarding incapacitating repression, the inductively found strategies lend themselves to a further differentiation. Routine measures are permanent and prevent challenges emanating from the population as a whole, while “emergency” measures are more acutely set in place to counter urgent threats. But ideally, refined frameworks should integrate the whole repertoire of strategies, specifying the different effects on different addressees.

Another aspect that turned out as relevant is the return of regionalism in many different aspects. First, societal forces hoped for leeway emanating from the successful counterparts in other countries. The choices that different actors on the national level make are regionally embedded. The bold moves of the Islamic movements resisting co-optation was not to be understood solely domestically, but also followed such a regional logic. Besides, the repercussions of protesters’ or the opposition’s ties to transnational actors remained out of the scope of this study. The same is true for an analysis of the windows of opportunity that opened for shifting regional alliances, which had their effects on the scope of action on the domestic level.

In a similar vein, a further desiderate for future research is the interaction between elites on the regional level. The study of authoritarian learning is still in its infancy, and not least the interplay of regional factors and elites’ decision-making is crucial for understanding why certain strategies were employed. Regional dynamics were decisive for

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the momentum of protests, which in turn also influenced the sequencing of government responses. The height of regional mobilization and euphoria were decisively influenced by events in Egypt. The feeling of people's empowerment was probably strongest between the end of January and mid-February 2011. This was also the time when political mobilization in Algeria reached its peak and the highest turnout in Jordanian protests was witnessed. Reacting to these developments, incumbent elites could or should have engaged in authoritarian learning in the sense of Heydemann and Leenders (2011). Masses of Egyptian citizens overwhelming the police forces in the end of January 2011 must have sent chills to security forces in the whole region. Following Mubarak's demise, rulers in other Arab countries in which protests took place certainly felt the need to avoid similar developments and therefore to disrupt mobilization. However, as authoritarian decision-making takes place in a very black box, it is difficult to empirically prove that the Egyptian negative example served as the backdrop that e.g. accounted for the massive display of police in the Algiers demonstrations. Analysts of Algerian politics mentioned previous domestic experiences with riot control which were also definitely important in containing the protests. Looking at one specific strategy of structural legitimation, Bank (2012) has similarly argued that the constitutional reform process in Jordan seemed to emulate the Moroccan model. King Muhammad VI let citizens vote in a referendum on a revised constitution that outside observers prematurely and falsely hailed as a great step towards the downsizing of the king's role to a simply representative one, even though it served to prevent such a development. Nevertheless, Jordanians were not allowed to vote on their amended constitution and its contents lagged behind the Moroccan example.

There is one element in which no authoritarian learning took place. The southern Jordanian discontent with rumbling tribes and the emergence of the *Hirak* showed at least geographic and socioeconomic similarities with the starting point of protests in Syria, the southern town of Dar'a. Both peripheral rural regions that were losers of recent centralization had been considered "an unlikely candidate for the start of an uprising" (Leenders & Heydemann 2012: 142). Paradoxically, this miscalculation in both cases enabled covert organization in the cities where it was least expected. In Jordan, the urban areas with large Palestinian populations were much easier to regain control of. While Schwedler's study of the geography of protests (2012) helps to understand the mapping of protests in Amman, the periphery and spatial aspects of protest and repres-

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sive policies in general are still understudied. As the dynamics of demonstrations have been surprising in many instances, groups that maintain a high level of contention even if they do not always voice political demands deserve further study. This applies to movements by day laborers and the unemployed, but also labor organizations and the tribes in Jordan.

As the results regarding successful legitimation were so disillusioning, the question remains what the long-term consequences of constantly simmering and frequently erupting discontent are not only for political rule, but also for a society. The lingering perception of illegitimacy must have devastating psychological effects. This was mirrored in the recent statement of an enraged Algerian editor who bitterly complained about a new book law that obliges citizens to obtain an authorization from the Ministry of Culture for keeping even private libraries, comparing it to colonial law which treated Algerians as second class subjects.<sup>284</sup> In a nation that still tries to derive legitimacy from anti-colonial struggle, such a judgment is disastrous. Studies on political socialization might shed light on the cognitive dissonance in the relation between official discourse and experiences. To come full circle, socialization research would also be desirable to look into the “acting ‘as if’” mechanism following up on Lisa Wedeen’s analysis of Syria (1999). The broad definition of legitimacy as mere acceptance includes such behavior, and it certainly plays a role in all authoritarian countries. As the Syrian example by now shows, acting “as if” does not continue forever. A more nuanced look at this mechanism also in other states is vital for locating the fine line between acceptance and revolt in temporarily surviving regimes.

### 7.5. OUTLOOK ON JORDAN’S AND ALGERIA’S FUTURE

Before concluding, a very brief sketch of events since the legislative elections in Jordan and Algeria shall elucidate the sustainability of strategies beyond the short term of January 2011 until May 2012 and January 2013 respectively. At the time of writing in summer 2014, the regimes in both states appear well consolidated, which is remarkable given the regional situation with Egypt, Libya and Syria as hotbeds of violence. Moreo-

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<sup>284</sup> Comments at a press conference presenting the petition against the associations law, 1 November 2013, Algiers. More information on the draft book law can be found online at <http://www.socialgerie.net/spip.php?article1286#1> rev. 15.06.14.

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ver, as has been established, recurrent protests have become a topical feature of post-Arab uprising politics.

Despite all this, the Algerian president had himself reelected for a fourth term in April 2014, casting his vote in a business-style wheelchair. In fall 2013, Bouteflika had even wrested enormous competences from the DRS and reshuffled government as to install even more close confidants in important positions. In defiance of his post-stroke ailment, the president has concentrated power internally and clamped down harshly on the protest movement that had formed against his fourth mandate, led by the CNCD-*Barakat* which is well-known for having disengaged from the weekly street protests in early 2011. Still, their renewed protests, which turned decidedly anti-personal, differently from three years before, failed to attract enough sympathizers as to defeat the security forces' superiority. In a different vein, Algerian-Moroccan tensions have been stirred over the past months, among other things on the issue of the Western Sahara. Seemingly irrational mutual provocations and discussions on the possibility of war prevail on both sides, in line with an age-old unconcealed attempt at diverting from internal problems through foreign policy. This neatly fits with the nationalist rhetoric and paranoia regarding foreign influences. Real foreign influence as regards the war against terror is welcome nevertheless. On the southern front, the Mali intervention necessitates security cooperation with Western powers, e.g. arms exports from Germany to Algeria have skyrocketed since 2011. The attack on the gas field in In Aménas in January 2013 during which AQIM fighters executed foreign workers underlined the need for strong Algerian security forces. In all, support is secured from the outside; rights are curtailed on the inside, but glossed over through populist war rhetoric.

In Jordan, the refugee problem is growing to dimensions that shape the population structure in a way similar to previous influxes of Palestinians and Iraqis, after about 600,000 Syrians have registered with the local UNHCR. The refugees' inflow is incessant and the largest camp in Za'tari has already come to be Jordan's fourth largest city, with intermittent riots underpinning the dire conditions of living there. Tensions between local citizens and refugees have also become manifest in the northern parts of the country, as many Jordanians feel threatened due to rising costs for housing and masses of Syrians who are ready to work for lower wages in the informal sector. On the political level, this does not materialize as of yet, and if any country is used to hosting immense numbers of refugees, it is Jordan. Paradoxically, the refugee problem helps rein-

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force the Jordanian self-image of being an island of stability in the Middle East – or, more accurately these days: “the eye of the tornado” (The Jordan Times, 8 June 2014). Divisions have further weakened the IAF, as leading Transjordanian Islamists have launched the so-called Zamzam initiative which seeks to represent a more moderate Islamic movement cooperating with the government and standing in elections. The IAF expelled all Zamzam activists from its ranks, but fears a crackdown as the regional tide turns against Islamists. Ryan’s conclusion is that “[i]f the Jordanian regime felt insecure during the early months of the Arab uprisings in 2011 – and perhaps especially so during the November 2012 riots triggered by economic austerity measures – it was noticeably more confident in 2013 and 2014” (Ryan 2014: 151).

To put it shortly, while Algeria suffers from post-traumatic stress and is at an impasse, Jordan is a survivor, “forever on the brink” (Lynch 2012a). For the time being, things could go on for quite a while as they used to. However, heavy dependency on external factors in both cases (high oil prices, external aid) turns the achieved stability into a short-term matter. Depending on what definition of stability one adheres to, there are different perspectives on the future. If stability is to be understood as the ability to deal with demands while preserving the nature of the system, then both Jordan and Algeria have been very stable. However, adding the prospective aspect which requires the structures in place to be able to absorb unforeseen future demands, the picture looks much bleaker. The uprisings in other Arab countries have taught us that change may come from where it is expected the least. As long as the leaderships of Jordan and Algeria refuse to be the initiators of tangible change, they might at some point lose control. In the long run, change will come all the more abruptly and then developments might become more disturbing.

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Going beyond the cases analyzed in this study, there are general implications for authoritarian rule during times of crisis. First, the way in which the strategies were employed show that there was no master plan for managing the challenge. Instead, it resembles an ad hoc muddling through with cash injections as emergency measures, superficial piecemeal concessions and massive deployment of security forces. Although the crisis management has worked for the moment, this does not mean that it should not be in the rulers’ interest to strive for legitimation that goes beyond allocation and the stability

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argument. As far as the Arab world is concerned, the two role models of Egypt and Tunisia loom large. Egypt embodies the risk of losing all achieved liberalization measures, even if they served as window dressing in a liberalized autocracy. For other Arab citizens, the risk of losing all of the few liberties and facing harsh and relentless repression under a new authoritarian regime might be just one of those “worse” alternatives that lead them to tacitly accept their current ruler. At the other side of the spectrum, Tunisia as the only candidate for a potential democratic transition might threaten the no-alternative discourse as soon as a new regime consolidates. The presence of a functioning Arab democracy as a regional model for participatory politics would be a source of dissatisfaction with domestic authoritarian rule.

However, even in the case of a regime breakdown, the establishment of a democracy is a rare outcome. As the empirical cases showed, structures in society and economy contradict principles that would facilitate democratization. Through decades of authoritarian politics, elites have destroyed societal cohesion, but more importantly, the pervasive power of the security apparatus, notably the strong role of the militaries in both countries is a force to be reckoned with.

The absence of participatory structures might prove fatal as soon as the mix of populist allocation, reform talk and deterrence ceases to function. The temporarily most successful strategies of legitimation were the most expensive ones, meaning a procrastination of solving the crises until they become even larger. The authoritarian retrenchment is a dangerous strategy, given that only strategies of the past were used and there has been no evident attempt at renewing the social contract. This would be necessary to include more citizens than the long-standing regime bases, which due to demographic factors are already losing in importance.

In pushing for necessary changes, pro-reform protesters in the Arab world cannot expect any help from Western powers. During the optimistic early phase of the uprisings, external support was rather targeted towards incumbents. As the regional tide turns more violent, the interests of state leaders as regards stability converge even more, with little reason to expect a change. When the next crisis comes, it will emanate from the inside, and both again will be caught on the wrong foot.

## APPENDIX

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Liberté  
Petra  
Reuters  
The Atlantic  
The Black Iris  
The Copenhagen Post  
The Guardian  
The Jerusalem Post  
The Jordan Times  
The New York Times  
The Telegraph  
Tout sur l'Algérie

### **List of Interview Questions in Jordan (March – April 2011)**

Why are the protests not such a widespread phenomenon as in other countries of the region?

What strategies are used to keep the population content?

What has changed in Jordan since the protests in Tunisia and Egypt began?

Are the local protests a regional phenomenon? Are there domestic grievances?

What do the protests signify? Is there a crisis?

What are the causes of the protests/crisis?

Whom – do you think – does the population blame for their situation?

What changes do you expect?

How far will political reform go? In which areas do you see changes?

What do you expect from the government? What do you expect from parliament?

Will parliament assume a more important role?

Do you expect a shift of power within institutions of the state?

Is this crisis different from other crises?

In what way is the crisis management different?

What do you expect from the new political parties?

Have you observed shifts in economic policy?

To what extent does the king/government rely on tradition, nationalism, religion, allocation, his own personal credibility, political reform as a source of legitimacy? Either by relying on the respective societal forces or talking of justifying his actions?

What are the most important sources of legitimacy in your opinion?

What are the reasons for stability?

Do you think the population regards as legitimate the king, state, government, parliament, political system?

## List of Interview questions in Algeria (October – November 2013)

### En général :

Quels sont les **changements** les plus importants dès le printemps arabe?

Quelles sont les **stratégies** les plus importantes? Et sont-elles **nouvelles** ?

Qu'est-ce qu'étaient les stratégies et les **narratives** les plus importants pour éviter plus de manifestations?

Y-a-t-il plus de **répression** maintenant? Envers quels **groupes**?

Où y-a-t-il plus de **libertés** ? Pour qui ?

Quel était le rôle des **élections** législatives de 2012 ?

Y-a-t-il des différences entre les **régions** et la capitale ? Est-ce important ?

### Stratégies :

Y avait-il des développements importants sur le plan religieux? Développements économiques? sociaux? identitaires? relatifs à la **légitimation** par le nationalisme?

Quel est le rôle des forces de **sécurité**? L'emploi ou la sécurité?

Comment essaie-t-on de combattre la **corruption** ?

La création et dissolution de la **CNCD** – comment cela s'est-il passé?

Le discours du régime concernant les **années noires** fonctionne-t-il?

Le discours concernant les **autres pays** du printemps arabe est-il plus important que le discours historique algérien?

### Manifestations :

Vous étiez présent à la manifestation du **douze** ou dix-neuvième **février 2011**? Qu'est-ce qui c'est passé là ?

Y avait-il des **tournants** pour les mouvements contestataires? Y avait-il des tournants regardant leurs **stratégies et exigences**?

Comment est le **support populaire** pour les grèves et les manifestations ?